UNLOCKING THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Introducing WomenForward

A network for change, a coalition of organizations empowering girls and women around the world through inspired investment, amplified voices, and collective action.
Dear Friends,

On 8 March every year, the world celebrates International Women’s Day. It’s a day to recognize women’s social, economic, cultural, and political achievements. And it’s also a day that marks a call to action for accelerating gender equality.

Although progress has been made toward gender equality over the years, much work remains. Globally, women’s participation in the workforce is unequal to men’s; one in three women still experience physical or sexual violence; and twice as many girls as boys will never start school. But we know that women are a powerful force for change, and in order to unlock their transformational potential, it’s imperative that we close the gender gap.

The PIMCO Foundation and 18 of its female-focused nonprofit partners have come together as WomenForward – a coalition for change – because we believe partnerships are key to advancing rights for women and girls. We can no longer rely on incremental change as stand-alone organizations; instead, we must team up, take action, and make the desired change happen.

Our partners tackle challenges that face women and girls from Cambodia to Rwanda to Guatemala to New York. Our group is creating a path of action and providing opportunity to underserved women and girls around the world.

On these next pages, you’ll read about our change-making partners and the impactful work they are pursuing. Achieving true gender equality means a cross-sector approach to elevating and solving this global issue. We can do it – together.

Best,

Sarah Middleton
Executive Director
PIMCO Foundation

Our WomenForward change-making partners are:

- Acumen
- BUILD NYC
- Calisto
- Figure Skating in Harlem
- Girls Write Now
- Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance (GAIA)
- Hot Bread Kitchen
- International Women’s Health Coalition
- Mercado Global
- Plan International USA
- Rising Tide Capital
- SHE-CAN
- Sustainable Health Enterprises (SHE)
- Thistle Farms
- Trickle Up
- Women for Women International
- Women’s Refugee Commission
- Women’s World Banking
ACUMEN

1. **Making the impossible possible:** Since 2001, Acumen has invested over $111M in 104 companies across 13 countries to impact the lives of 232M people. Both men and women experience poverty, but persistent gender inequity means that women are disproportionately affected by limited access to education, quality healthcare, power, and cooking solutions; and the market as smallholder farmers.

2. **Leading the way with Lean Data:** Using our impact measurement and management methodology Lean Data, Acumen talks directly to customers to understand if our companies’ products and services are creating meaningful change in their lives. Since 2014, we’ve talked to more than 45,000 customers to complete over 150 Lean Data projects for companies in our portfolio and the impact investing community. Utilizing gender disaggregated Lean Data, we’re starting to help companies adapt and improve how they engage and impact both women and men.

3. **Preparing moral leaders for the 21st century:** We’re building a pipeline of global leaders who understand what it takes to create change in our complex, interconnected world. Our Fellows Program is a leadership development program designed to connect and cultivate dynamic individuals who are committed to tackling poverty and injustice. The program is currently offered in East Africa, India and Pakistan with plans to expand to three more regions by 2020. Today, we have 184 women Fellows in our community, including three Fellows recently selected to share on a global stage at TEDWomen.

4. **Changing the world through online learning:** Acumen is the world’s school for social change, an online course platform offering over 30 free and low-cost courses. We have seen over 600,000 unique course sign ups from 190 countries, among them 60 percent of all Acumen course participants are women. Global changemakers get inspired by our popular Master Classes featuring women entrepreneurs and thought leaders like Elizabeth Gilbert, Angela Duckworth and Emily Esfahani Smith.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:**
- **Share our message.** Stay up to date on all things Acumen by following us on Instagram @acumenorg, Twitter @acumen and Medium www.medium.com/@acumen.
- **Contribute to a better future.** Join our Partner community or consider making a monthly gift to Acumen to invest in the futures of women and girls across the globe.
- **Be a catalyst for change.** Take an online course with social changemakers around the world or combine your volunteerism with philanthropy and sign up to join a Acumen Impact Circle.

**A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:**
Acumen investee company LifeSpring has a chain of hospitals in India providing dignified and affordable maternal and pediatric health care. Despite India’s great developmental strides, maternal mortality and morbidity levels remain among the highest in the world. Only 67 percent of Indian women are cared for by a skilled attendant during birth, more than 45,000 women die every year from pregnancy-related causes, and mothers in the lowest income bracket are two and a half times more likely to die from childbirth than the average. Private hospitals are prohibitively expensive and the public healthcare system’s provision of maternity services is often inadequate and does not extend to low-income communities.

Since Acumen’s initial investment in LifeSpring in 2008, the company has grown from one hospital to twelve. Today, LifeSpring is the largest chain of maternity hospitals in South India. Fariya Salama, 32, is a mother and a customer of LifeSpring. This is her story:

“I am a mother of three. My first delivery was at a private hospital, and my second and third babies were delivered at LifeSpring. The charges at the private hospital were crazy, super expensive. We couldn’t afford it. When I got pregnant with my second child, I didn’t want to go to a government hospital, even though it’s free. I have to go to the hospital alone because my husband works as an electrician, and there is no one there to care for me at the government hospital. At LifeSpring, I feel safe and well cared for. When my little girl was on her way, my mother, my husband and my mother-in-law were all outside and I was in the operating room. I felt very alone. But the doctors and nurses at LifeSpring helped me a lot. I felt like I had family around me. I didn’t feel alone at all.

I was the first in my family to come to LifeSpring. Now everyone in my family comes here. I love being a mother. Everything I do now is for my children. Our oldest daughter is a girl, and we want her to be a doctor here at LifeSpring.”
THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:

1. Reducing high school dropout rate: Recent research shows that high school dropouts are unqualified for 90% of U.S. jobs and will earn $250,000 less than a high school graduate and $1 million less than a college graduate over the course of their lifetimes. Through the process of developing and managing their own small businesses, BUILD students experience firsthand how their academics are not only relevant but also crucial to life beyond the classroom. As the applicability of school to “real life” becomes clear, and as students grow in knowledge and self-confidence, the BUILD program stimulates their motivation, challenges them to set high expectations for themselves, and empowers them to succeed. Ninety-six percent of BUILD students graduate high school on time compared to 73% of low-income seniors nationwide and 81% of all students.

2. Increasing college enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates: BUILD students receive consistent, ongoing support throughout high school, which immerses them in a strong college-going culture and helps them stay focused on and motivated to achieve their academic goals. Of our BUILD high school graduates, 75% enroll in college immediately after graduation, compared to 66% of all high school graduates nationwide.

3. Twenty-first century skill development: Success in the 21st-century workforce requires a new set of social and emotional skills, variously called “life skills,” or “non-cognitive skills.” A 2012 report published by the American Management Association concluded that “today’s employees need to think critically, solve problems, innovate, collaborate, and communicate more effectively” and must be equipped with skills “beyond the traditional ‘three Rs’ of reading, writing, and arithmetic.” At BUILD students practice six critical non-cognitive or what we call “Spark Skills:” collaboration, communication, grit, innovation, problem solving, and self-management. Through the BUILD program, students demonstrate acquisition of and increased proficiency in these skills.

4. Career preparedness/exposure: BUILD students launch and operate real businesses – and earn real money. It’s not a simulation. They write business plans, pitch to funders, market to customers, and respond to setbacks. With support from community-based mentors, they explore career paths, network with industry professionals, track their academic progress, and participate in internships and job shadowing. This exposure allows students to see the wealth of career options available to them in addition to entrepreneurship.

5. Developing an entrepreneurial mindset: BUILD students learn to embrace having an entrepreneurial growth mindset – to become the architects of their own futures, and seeing entrepreneurship not merely as the acquisition of and increased proficiency in these skills. Through the BUILD program, students demonstrate acquisition of and increased proficiency in these skills.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:
BUILD is currently serving over 2,000 students at 34 different high schools in the San Francisco Bay Area, Boston, Washington, D.C., and New York City. To support BUILD’s mission and the work of our student entrepreneurs, we invite you to become a volunteer and/or make a donation. Visit us at www.build.org.

A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:
Shandell’s grandmother passed away shortly after she started high school in the Bronx. As a result, Shandell had to take on additional responsibilities as her family rebuilt their foundation. BUILD provided Shandell with a platform to enhance the leadership skills that her grandmother instilled in her, while simultaneously walking her through the process of becoming successful. Shandell shared, “Many students do not think that their lives make a difference in the world, and because of that, they do not take the time to invest in their future. BUILD teaches students important skills and helps them develop parts of themselves that they did not know they had. All of that inspires students to invest in themselves.” Shandell served as the CEO of her business, which manufactured lip balms made out of natural products. The BUILD curriculum taught her how to lead the team with fortitude, positivity, humility, and integrity.

BUILD uses entrepreneurship to ignite the potential of youth from under-resourced communities an propel them to high school, college and career success. We partner with schools that have graduation rates as low as 40%, and our program model targets low-income, disconnected youth. At BUILD, students engage in hands-on curriculum and create real businesses with the support of college-educated mentors. As a result, school becomes more relevant and students learn critical 21st century skills necessary to succeed professionally and in life.
CALLISTO

Callisto is a trauma-informed, online sexual assault/harassment reporting system designed to create a more empowering reporting experience for survivors and facilitate the identification of repeat assailants.

Callisto provides a confidential and secure way for survivors to create a time-stamped record of what happened and learn about reporting options and support resources. It also enables survivors to report only if someone else reports the same assailant. This innovative “matching system” is the first of its kind, and it means that survivors who won’t come forward alone can come forward together.

THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:

1. Survivor-centered and trauma-informed documentation and reporting processes for sexual assault: Callisto has worked with trauma experts to create an online reporting system that enables survivors to make the decision that is best for them, allowing them to choose when, where, and how they record or report their experience. Callisto’s survivor-centered approach increases the chances that a survivor will report, and that they will experience positive emotional and adjudicative outcomes.

2. Sexual assault survivor support and healing: Callisto is designed to empower survivors with options to seek support. In addition to various options for recording and reporting an assault, Callisto provides useful information regarding survivor support services, including emotional, medical, and legal resources.

3. Identification of repeat perpetrators of sexual assault and harassment: An estimated 90% of sexual assaults are committed by repeat perpetrators. The Callisto “matching escrow” allows survivors to enter the identity of their offender/harasser into the escrow, which is securely stored until another victim enters the identity of the same individual. When a “match” is identified, survivors are notified by Callisto and provided options regarding next steps.

4. Collection and protection of sexual assault incidence and reporting data: Callisto offers its partners data on victimization and perpetration trends, including how users choose to report or record an incident, assault cadence, and more.

5. Data-driven sexual assault prevention and intervention programs: Callisto provides knowledge to inform and/or influence policies, programs, prevention, and response that can prevent future assaults.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Visit our website to learn about the many ways you can support Callisto, including exploring a professional partnership, helping bring Callisto to a college campus, donating, and more.

Sign up for our newsletter and follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for the latest updates.

A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:

Student advocates have long been at the forefront of the movement to combat campus sexual assault — and bring Callisto to their universities. At Stanford, the 18th Undergraduate Senate passed a resolution to adopt Callisto, spurring joint conversations with the Graduate Student Council. What’s more, in the year leading up to Stanford’s adoption of Callisto, Stanford’s student-run newspaper, The Stanford Daily, published several stories referencing Callisto. In April 2017, Stanford University became the eighth institution to adopt Callisto.

Shanta Katipamula, chair of the Stanford Undergraduate Senate and a leader among student advocates of Callisto, remarked: “Callisto is informed by extensive survivor research, making it a truly survivor-centric reporting mechanism, something that is missing from most current reporting options. In my research, I found Callisto to be a one-of-a-kind tool that placed the needs of survivors first while also providing data for universities that could help prevent assaults.”
THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:

1. Leadership Development: Access to Self-Advocacy/Leadership classes, support from social workers, cultural and educational trips and mentoring programs. Social and emotional skill development are crucial tools for long-term success and oftentimes not provided in schools. Girls are typically called on less in class than boys and are more likely to be labeled as “bossy” or “aggressive” instead of “leaders” when they do. As a result, by middle school girls are only 25% likely to say they like taking the lead. The implications of this inaccessibility to leadership development opportunities are long-lasting; women make up just 19% of the US Congress, 5% of Fortune 1,000 CEOs and 17% of corporate boards.

2. Educational Support: Access to STEAM, financial literacy, and communications skill-building classes and targeted small-group tutoring to improve core competencies. The high school graduation rate among our girls’ peers is 65% and proficiencies in reading and math are 30% and 35%, respectively.

3. Health and Wellness: Access to the sport of figure skating, a non-traditional sport in the communities we serve, fitness conditioning, and nutrition classes. 46% of school-age children in East and Central Harlem are overweight or obese. More than one in three adolescents from these communities report not exercising at least 20 minutes a day, and nearly six in 10 watch television at least three hours a day. They are also nearly three times less likely to have access to daily physical education class in school than teens in other neighborhoods.

4. Community Building: Access to community events to promote healthy and active lifestyles, and a safe and structured environment that promotes the formation of deep bonds between girls and families. Developing a strong community among our girls and families, which they oftentimes lack in other areas of their lives, creates a culture of excellence and mutual support.

5. College Access: Access to individual and group college guidance, trips, workshops and panels for girls and their families to help them navigate the admission process and prepare them for success to and through college. Of 2015 graduates in NYC, only 35% are deemed college ready by the NY Department of Education and college success among minority girls is 10%.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:
- Donate: [https://figureskatinginharlem.org/donate/](https://figureskatinginharlem.org/donate/)
- Become a volunteer: [https://figureskatinginharlem.org/volunteer/](https://figureskatinginharlem.org/volunteer/)

A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:
Kemisa Doumbia enrolled in Figure Skating in Harlem as a shy young seven year-old girl and will graduate high school this year. As she has stated, her biggest lesson learned on the ice and the classroom has been the importance of defining and working hard towards a goal, and understanding that success does not come without sacrifice.
GLOBAL AIDS INTERFAITH ALLIANCE (GAIA)

The Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance (GAIA) is a secular nonprofit that delivers innovative healthcare programs in resource-deprived regions in Africa, especially those most affected by HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. GAIA's programs seek to empower girls and women, emphasize prevention, and expand access. While completely secular, our name recalls an early grassroots approach, incorporating leaders of all faiths as important community influencers and messengers on health topics. The grassroots legacy continues today, as GAIA's programs are developed in-country based on the local context and focused on strengthening systems and developing capacity as a means to real and sustainable change.

THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:

1. Building healthcare capacity in Malawi, where there are 0.3 nurses for every 1,000 people (versus 3:1,000 in South Africa and 10:1,000 in the US), and 65% of public sector nursing positions are vacant.

2. Empowering girls and young women with a degree in nursing and a bridge to professional careers, in a country where only 3% of girls achieve a university education. GAIA's Nursing Scholars become role models, inspiring the next generation about what is possible with an education.

3. Improving gender inequality. Malawi ranks near the bottom of the gender inequality index (177/180 countries), a measure of female empowerment and economic status.

4. Lifting young women and their families out of extreme poverty. With full-time, stable employment, these nurses become economically empowered and able to care for their families. Two-thirds report spending their stipend or salary to educate and feed younger siblings.

5. Working to end AIDS in southern, rural Malawi where – like developing countries around the world – girls and women are experiencing the highest rate of new infections. Female health workers are needed to reach young women with non-judgmental, “youth” and “girl” friendly messages.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:
Visit www.thegaia.org to learn more, watch our new film: “AIDS isn’t over… but it could be,” and donate. Follow us on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/thegaia), Instagram (@thegaia_malawi), or Twitter (@theGAIA). Subscribe to our mailing list for ongoing communications and updates. Host a “Do It Yourself” informational and fundraising event.

A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:
Bridget was born in 1999 and comes from Chikwawa district in southern, rural Malawi. She is a single orphan and her mother earns a living by selling tomatoes. Her uncle, who is a painter, had also supported her secondary education, but he insisted that Bridget should stop going to school and get married because she is a girl. For this reason he stopped supporting her. Bridget was not granted a government loan and, therefore, had no options for continuing her education. Thanks to GAIA, Bridget is very sure that she will successfully complete her studies, and be able to support her mother and four siblings by working as a nurse.
**GIRLS WRITE NOW**

Over the past 20 years, Girls Write Now has been a leader in the arts education space as New York’s first and only writing and mentoring organization for girls. We match teen girls with women professional writers and digital media makers as their personal mentors. Through one-to-one mentoring, innovative and rigorous writing and technology curricula, and performance and publishing opportunities, we inspire professional women to share their craft and empower girls to become the next generation of storytellers. Never has our mission been more relevant or urgent. Our mentees — over 95% girls of color, 90% high need, and 70% immigrant or first generation — are published in outlets including The New York Times, Newsweek, and BuzzFeed, perform at Lincoln Center and the United Nations, and earn hundreds of Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. 100% of Girls Write Now seniors go on to college. The organization has been distinguished three times by the White House as one of the nation’s top youth programs and twice by the Nonprofit Excellence Awards as one of New York’s top ten nonprofits. Reaching thousands of girls, Girls Write Now is a founding partner of the New York City Council’s STARS Citywide Girls Initiative.

**THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:**

1. **Strategic Plan:** Girls Write Now is currently implementing our five-year strategic growth plan to expand our reach to even more underserved girls throughout New York City, enrich our flagship programming, and elevate the voices of our girls, all while building the infrastructure and funding necessary to do so.

2. **Uplifting Voices:** Girls Write Now is dedicated to raising the voices of our mentees — over 95% girls of color, 90% high need, and 70% immigrant or first generation — who are among the most vulnerable and marginalized in society. We help them hone their craft and provide the platform for them to share their stories with the world.

3. **Building Community:** Girls Write Now is focused on strengthening our community and our mentor pool to meet record breaking demands for our program. This includes developing our alumnae program to continue our deep investment of mentees in college, career, and beyond.

4. **Strategic Partnerships:** We are constantly building strategic partnerships that directly benefit our mentees’ professional development and elevate their voices. In the past year alone, we have collaborated with The Wall Street Journal, GIPHY, Girlboss, Penguin Random House, Chime for Change, Urban Outfitters, and The Wing.

5. **Digital Media Literacy:** We are continuing to build support for our digital media mentoring programs which explore the intersection of art and technology in this ever-changing landscape, shed light on new careers in this space, and give women opportunities to create, compete, lead, and have a voice in historically male driven tech industries.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:**

Above all, Girls Write Now’s mission is to share and support girls’ incredible stories. You can help by attending our acclaimed CHAPTERS reading series and QWERTY Digital Exhibition to see their work live and to hear this year’s keynotes from authors like Meg Wolitzer and Jenny Zhang, by purchasing our annual anthology, applying to become a mentor — and by making a donation that will directly support the class of 2018 and our future writers and leaders.

**A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:**

In August 2016, before she had even begun her first year of college, mentee alumnae Romaisaa Benzizoune published her first op-ed piece in the New York Times, “At the Beach in My Burkini,” a personal response to the burkini ban in France. Romaisaa explained how Girls Write Now had prepared her for this moment: “I had to remind myself that I have done this before — have written, pitched, edited, published — and that I was fully capable of getting the job done. In other words, I had to forget the Times label and focus on doing for this piece what I would do for any other: making it the best that I possibly could.” The work paid off — to date, Romaisaa has published three pieces in The New York Times, authored a column at McSweeney’s, “Hijabi in Plain Sight,” and appeared in BuzzFeed, Newsweek, while also achieving regional and national recognition by Scholastic. Romaisaa is currently a student at New York University.
transferable hard/soft skills and work experience, putting them in high demand by hiring managers. Our job placement rate is 100% with a one-year retention rate of 90%.

THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:

1. **Strategic Plan:** The low-income and immigrant women we serve face profound barriers to long-term economic independence, including limited education, literacy and work experience, as well as instability resulting from domestic violence, housing insecurity and recent incarceration. For immigrant women, these challenges are exacerbated by language barriers and isolation.

2. **The wage gap for women is a destabilizing force,** as many families rely on a single woman’s income, and cannot survive if she does not earn a fair wage. In NYC, close to 25% of the city’s four million women and girls are economically vulnerable – they are likely to live in poverty, have lower earnings and suffer longer spells of unemployment than other women. The high rate of employment results from a lack of affordable childcare and flexibility of many hourly wage jobs as well as gaps in work history or educational attainment.

3. **The culinary industry needs reliable, hard-working staff,** and hiring managers struggle to find and retain good candidates; we help match program graduates with fair wage jobs offering benefits and opportunity for advancement. Baking is one of the top three occupations in NY State’s food manufacturing industry, yet the industry’s workforce continues to be dominated by men (65%). Every woman who graduates from our program secures a job, and through close engagement with employment partners, we continue to meet industry demand for skilled labor while changing the face of a male-dominated industry.

**HOT BREAD KITCHEN**

Hot Bread Kitchen is a nonprofit social enterprise that creates economic opportunity through careers in food. Our workforce development program, Bakers in Training, supports low-income and immigrant women in achieving economic security, with 100% of participants living below the poverty line when they enroll. Women start off their training with Hot Bread in a four-week fundamentals course focused on culinary, academics including ESL learning, and professional soft skills. Students who successfully complete the course are placed in three-month, paid, on-the-job apprenticeships with our employment partners. Women graduate with

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:**

Hot Bread Kitchen’s work is made possible through a combination of philanthropic support and earned revenues from the sale of our breads. Visit hotbreadkitchen.org to learn more and make a donation today. Our breads are available through our online store—every loaf purchased creates training opportunities for the women we serve!

**A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:**

Misbah’s first time on the subway was the trip from the Bronx to Hot Bread Kitchen for her interview. Misbah immigrated to the US from Pakistan in 2009. She did not work outside the home until she began with us. The first several years in the city were lonely and trying, as she stayed home caring for her young son while her husband worked long hours to support the family. Misbah joined Sapna NYC, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of South Asian women where she learned about Hot Bread Kitchen’s Bakers in Training program.

A home baker of roti and chapati, Misbah easily took to culinary work and enjoyed learning how to make other breads from around the world. She graduated in four months and joined the team at the Harlem Whole Foods Market, where she works full-time and earns $13.20/hour with access to benefits. Misbah is happy to be able to contribute to her family’s annual income. She says, “there are no opportunities in Pakistan for women like me. You have to pay for training. At Hot Bread Kitchen, they provide training and pay us.”
The International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC) advances the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and young people, particularly adolescent girls, in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. For over 33 years, IWHC’s commitment to human rights and social justice has informed its efforts to provide strategic financial support and mentorship to women leaders and organizations in Africa, Latin America, and Asia and the Middle East to develop CSE curricula and to advocate with their own governments to implement CSE programs through the formal education system.

1. **End Child Early and Forced Marriage:** IWHC shapes global policies and works with local organizations to prevent early and forced marriage, and to ensure that vulnerable youth, including married and unmarried adolescent girls, can access the information and services they need to know their rights. We also advocate at the UN and in Washington, DC, to secure government commitments and funding to end the harmful practice of child marriage around the world.

2. **Ensure Safe and Legal Abortion:** Even though abortion is legal in almost all countries to save a woman’s life, safe abortion services are often not provided by public health systems or are of poor quality. We work to expand the availability and quality of safe abortion services as part of comprehensive reproductive health policies and programs by investing in women’s groups and conducting global-level policy advocacy.

3. **Promote Comprehensive Sexuality Education:** Adolescence is a critical period when a girl’s future potential and opportunities can flourish through education, economic opportunities, and psycho-social support. We strengthen grassroots programs and advance global policies that ensure adolescent girls get the information, services, skills, and support they need to protect their health and human rights.

4. **Advance the Rights of Adolescent Girls:** Adolescence is a critical period when a girl’s future potential and opportunities can flourish through education, economic opportunities, and psycho-social support. We strengthen grassroots programs and advance global policies that ensure adolescent girls get the information, services, skills, and support they need to protect their health and human rights.

5. **Strengthen the Women’s Movement:** We conduct research and advocacy to share best practices and learnings across the women’s movement. We also invest in vital feminist organizations, and identify and mentor young activists to become the new champions of the global women’s movement. We equip them with the tools, training, and access to policy networks that they need to advocate successfully for their priorities at national and global levels.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:**

At a time when the rights and health of women and girls are threatened like never before, a gift to IWHC will ensure that women and girls in every region of the world are funded, trained, and prepared to defend their rights and achieve their full potential.

Learn more about our priorities, make a gift, and join our community of supporters dedicated to advancing women’s and girls’ health and rights at [iwhc.org/give].

**A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:**

As a girl in rural Cameroon, Danedjo Hadija had little say in her future—including when or if to marry. Despite her interest in obtaining an education, when she turned 14, her family informed her it was time to end her education and marry a man in his mid-30s. Danedjo would become his second wife.

A few months before Danedjo’s wedding was scheduled, she decided she could not marry. With the help of a social worker, she escaped her family home. While she now had to work to remain independent, she also began to connect with a community of support. Danedjo attended weekly meetings at the Association de Lutte contre les Violences faites aux Femmes (ALVF) – an IWHC grantee and a national organization that works to end violence against women. At ALVF meetings, she met other young women who had either avoided or survived a forced marriage and decided to organize and support them.

Danedjo helped establish Association pour la Promotion de l’Autonomie et des Droits de la Jeune FilleFemme (APAD) – a youth-led organization devoted to the prevention of child marriage, and now an IWHC grantee. Danedjo focused APAD’s work on educating girls and communities about their human rights, including the right to choose whom and when to marry, and to provide literacy and skills-building programs to empower survivors of early and forced marriage to lead autonomous lives.

Today, APAD continues this work, teaching girls and young women to learn about their bodies and their rights, share their experiences, and ask questions in a safe space. APAD also addresses the economic barriers that make it difficult for women to live independently. Since their founding, both APAD and ALVF have become a critical source of support for women in rural Cameroon, changing cultural norms and strengthening women and their communities to bring an end to early and forced marriage.

Every year, 15 million girls under age 18 are married worldwide. This means that every day, 41,000 girls become wives. Women like Danedjo are changing that statistic. Since its inception, APAD has prevented scores of early and forced marriages and has trained hundreds of survivors to speak out against this practice. With IWHC’s support, ALVF and APAD empower women to make informed decisions about their bodies and their futures.
MERCADO GLOBAL

Mercado Global is a nonprofit with a mission to transform the lives of women. We create beautiful and thoughtfully designed accessories that not only have the ability to transform an outfit, they can empower an entire community of indigenous women.

A single thread is stronger when woven with many others. Through our not-for-profit model, we strengthen communities of women, weaving savings and loan support (income and access to equipment through microloans), education (financial literacy, business development, self-esteem and family health and nutrition), and market access into a program focused on financial independence to overcome poverty.

THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:
1. Supporting women small business owners
2. Making education accessible for girls
3. Investing in the artisan sector
4. Giving women access to the formal banking sector
5. Breaking the cycle of poverty by investing in women

HOW YOU CAN HELP:
• Support artisan made – buy a bag that empowers women and girls today
• Visit us at www.mercadoglobal.org

A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:
Marta Julia Cojitín, a partner artisan for five years, has risen quickly to become an invaluable part of the Mercado Global team and is rewriting her future in the process.

A combination of passion, hard work, and quickness to learn led her to take full advantage of our programs. Marta Julia now works full time as a sample maker and purchased her own sewing machine through our microloan program.

With her income earned through Mercado Global, she is not only sending her three children to school, but is going to school herself.

While Marta Julia hopes to help her daughter realize her dream of becoming a teacher, her wishes extend beyond her family. When asked about her hopes for the future, Marta Julia says, “I hope that all the children in my community receive an education, and that their mothers have jobs that provide them with the means to take care of them.”
To accomplish this mission, Plan believes in the power and promise of women as a key element. Our WomenLead Institute (WLI) offers women-centered leadership services designed to maximize women’s leadership potential, promote gender equality, and advance sustainable development in nonprofit, government, and political institutions around the world.

Our unique program offerings strengthen confidence, enhance leadership and management competencies, and promote connections for women globally through:

- Women’s Leadership Workshops
- Woman-to-Woman Coaching
- Global and Country-Level Networks
- Small Grants to Local NGOs
- Women for Girls Programming

The immense multiplier effect of these women working on the front lines of development sets WLI programs apart. When women move forward the world moves with them.

THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:

1. **Women’s leadership and empowerment** to ensure greater representation of women leaders in senior positions;
2. **Economic empowerment** for women and young people;
3. **Protection from gender-based violence, trafficking, and other harmful cultural practices** for women and girls;
4. **Building long-term trust** with communities and promoting community mobilization and advocacy; and
5. **Creating opportunities and options** for girls through skills development and mentoring.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Partner with Plan’s WomenLead Institute, a program designed to provide emerging women leaders with the tools and knowledge they need to advance and grow their skills, assume leadership roles, and become fully engaged members of their communities.

Visit us at [https://www.planusa.org/leadership-capacity-development](https://www.planusa.org/leadership-capacity-development).

A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:

“"The leadership training guided me to improve my leadership and business skills and to invest those skills in my employees and constituents. It taught me how to promote gender equality and equity in a way that includes men and boy champions in our homes, businesses, and communities. I would say that the WomenLead Institute is a propeller, as well as a one-stop shop, for women’s capacity building.”

– Lynda, WLI participant from Nigeria
THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:

1. **Working Poverty:** The typical Rising Tide Entrepreneur is a single mother of two children, earning less than $35,000 a year; however, the living wage in New Jersey is $50,000 to support this family. RTC equips her to start and grow a successful business so she can achieve self-sufficiency, save for the future, educate her children, and contribute to her local economy.

2. **Creating Access to Education:** RTC provides accredited training and education to aspiring entrepreneurs who would not be able to afford it otherwise. The model for acceptance into its signature program, the Community Business Academy (CBA), is based on the 80-20 rule, meaning 80% of Rising Tide Entrepreneurs are low-to-moderate income.

3. **Social Capital and Networks:** After graduating from the CBA, Rising Tide Entrepreneurs participate in a suite of Business Acceleration Services (BAS) designed to help them set goals for their businesses and work towards them with the support of a coach. Services offered in the BAS include the Rising Tide HelpDesk, a suite of small business service providers vetted and ready to work with Rising Tide Entrepreneurs, Access to Capital through RTC’s Credit to Capital program, and pro bono legal services through NYU and Rutgers’ Law Schools.

4. **Inclusive Entrepreneurship:** RTC operates in five cities across three counties in northern New Jersey, and offers its services in both English and Spanish. Since inception, RTC has actively worked to include groups like immigrants, veterans, the disabled, and the formerly incarcerated, empowering them to create paths to opportunity by creating their own businesses.

5. **Local Living Economies:** Rising Tide Entrepreneurs are local innovators, job creators and role models in their communities. They contribute to the local tax base by keeping dollars circulating in their neighborhoods. RTC serves as a background organization in the communities where we operate, rallying local business owners, anchor institutions and government officials to fully support local businesses.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

We have more than 2,000 Rising Tide Entrepreneurs in and around northern New Jersey building businesses, creating jobs and investing in their communities. But there are hundreds more on our CBA waiting list. A donation of any amount would greatly help us meet the demand for our services to equip underserved entrepreneurs in New Jersey. Visit RisingTideCapital.org to learn more.

A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:

“Those 12 weeks helped me to see my program as a business,” Towanda McEachern said. “When I started out I didn’t know how to monetize my program. When it is your passion you will do it for free. But through the CBA I learned to see my business as a system, and understand what my business model looks like. Rising Tide Capital was the restart of my journey.”
THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:

1) Building concentrated leadership: Many developing nations lack female leaders at the decision-making tables. We build powerful cohorts of educated women from the same countries who work together to create change in their nations.

2) Investing in tertiary education: Global investments in girls’ education typically stop after secondary school. We extend that investment by providing the best and brightest access to a university degree, which is a key credential for leaders globally.

3) Pushing U.S. scholarship investments down socio-economic pyramid: Most scholarship funds are given to middle and upper income students, but we work hard to identify the lowest income girls who have leadership potential but lack access to educational opportunities.

4) Empowering local leaders: We empower real change agents, the women who grew up facing the problems of their countries and have a deep understanding of the solutions needed to create change.

5) Creating access to role models: Teams of 5-6 mentors, who are leaders in their fields, support each scholar. Our 200+ mentors guide our scholars throughout their college journeys and leadership careers at home.

SHE-CAN, which stands for Supporting Her Education Changes A Nation, is a nonprofit dedicated to building female leadership in post-conflict countries.

Since 2011, SHE-CAN has grown immensely:
- 46 low-income Cambodian, Rwandan and Afghanistan women have won full-ride U.S. scholarships
- 23 U.S. colleges are enriched by SHE-CAN scholars
- $13 million in scholarships have been funneled to women in post-conflict countries

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Your donation allows us to select more scholars and put them on paths toward world-class educations and leadership careers at home. Learn more and donate at www.shecan.global.

A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:

Bonnette, along with her mother and brother, survived the Rwandan genocide. She rebuilt her life by dedicating herself to school and leadership roles. Now a Whitman College senior, Bonnette is double-majoring in politics and French and is President of the African Student Association.

She’s had impressive internships with Rwanda’s Parliament and Congresswoman Betty McCollum’s D.C. office. Bonnette wants to help grow Rwanda’s economy, foster women leaders and, as she proudly told an audience of SHE-CAN donors, become the “next Member of Parliament in Rwanda.”
SUSTAINABLE HEALTH ENTERPRISES (SHE)

Sustainable Health Enterprises (SHE) is a social enterprise whose mission is to invest in people and ideas that are typically overlooked (and often taboo) to drive social and economic change. SHE’s first initiative, SHE28, was launched in 2009 in Rwanda to address a global problem: girls’ and women’s lack of affordable menstrual products. SHE28 utilizes a comprehensive market-based model to manufacture and distribute a locally sourced product that drives job creation, provides access to affordable pads, and tackles social taboos. SHE’s ultimate goal for SHE28 is to replicate its scalable business model into new countries.

THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:

1. Girls and women miss school and work around the world because they lack access to a hygienic and comfortable way to manage their periods. Over 22,000 women and girls now have access to go! pads.
2. The income earned as a subsistence farmer is often not enough to for a woman and her family to live on. SHE improves the income of nearly 1,000 farmers by finding a use for banana fibers that would otherwise be wasted.
3. Some jobs are considered to be only for men, and this means that economic development can sometimes leave women out. 80% of SHE’s staff and leadership team is female, and we pushed to see female candidates in areas such as production that are usually male dominated.
4. Pads and many other basic necessities often have to be imported into low-income countries rather than being produced locally. This leaves a major opportunity gap that hinders the growth of local economy. SHE produces locally to build local capacity in production and manufacturing and create jobs where they are needed most.
5. Social stigma and popular myths around periods limit women and girls from participating in extra-curricular and educational activities. SHE engages educators and school staff that work with girls to help both students and teachers understand menstruation.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

• Invest in SHE to spur economic growth that employs women and make sure more women and girls can access go! pads.
• Go to our website at SHEinnovates.com and share our SHE 28 campaign video with your family and friends to make more people aware of the issues affecting women and girls.

A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:

Gloriose is now in her final year of secondary school at a school which participated in SHE’s health teacher training. She is able to purchase go! pads at local kiosks for just 7 cents each, making pads affordable to her for the first time. “When I am using go! pads, I feel safe in class and it prevents me from getting distracted wondering if I stained my skirt or not. When I didn’t have pads, I sometimes skipped classes because I was too worried. During our lessons about menstrual hygiene, I learned that it’s not necessary or ideal to stay home and suspend everything you were doing. In fact, it is good to try to be active and do my everyday activities.”
THISTLE FARMS

Thistle Farms’ mission is to heal, empower, and employ women survivors of trafficking, prostitution, and addiction. We do this by providing safe and supportive housing, the opportunity for economic independence, and a strong community of advocates and partners. We believe love is the strongest force for change in the world.

THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:

1. Child abuse/sexual violence: Therapy specialized for sexual assault and trauma
2. Complex physical and mental health needs: Individualized medical, dental and therapeutic care
3. Homelessness: Two years of residential living (offered for free as with all our services)
4. Chronic unemployment/felonies on record: Tangible work and leadership skills, a chance to build a resume
5. Poverty: Stable income to allow a woman to move towards independence

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Purchasing Thistle Farms products directly benefits the survivors who make them. At least six women will receive work from the sale of one candle or one bottle of lotion. Our products are a way of creating something beautiful and productive out of pain and trauma, and to affirm that love does heal.


A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:

“Decades of drug use taught me that in order to receive something, you had to give something in return. But here at Thistle Farms, they give everything unconditionally, without ever expecting anything in return. It gave me hope, peace, and restoration in my own life. At my age, you might think that what you have been doing is what you will do for the rest of your life. That’s not the case for me. I’m not addicted anymore or set in my old ways. I don’t feel like I’m 60. I don’t look like I’m 60. I’m more vibrant now! My head is clear! It all goes back to the program. I give myself credit for staying sober this time, but I have to give the most credit to Magdalene and Thistle Farms.”

– Lolita, a 2017 graduate of the Magdalene residential program of Thistle Farms
**THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:**

1. **Economic Poverty:** Globally, 767 million people live in extreme poverty on less than $1.90/day. Trickle Up helps women in extreme poverty achieve their dreams for a better life by providing economic opportunity. With a grant to start a business such as shopkeeping, rearing livestock, or weaving garments to sell at local markets, women turn a good idea into a reliable income. With regular coaching they learn to save, access credit, and develop livelihood plans for the future.

2. **Social Exclusion:** Poverty is about more than just money—it’s about exclusion. Many women living in extreme poverty are isolated from their communities, and even their own families. Trickle Up helps women build support systems through membership in savings groups, and increase their self-esteem, decision-making power, and control over resources.

3. **Vulnerability:** Trickle Up is focused on supporting the world’s most vulnerable people. Women, people with disabilities, refugees, and members of indigenous and other marginalized groups comprise the majority of the extreme poor. They face severe discrimination, lack access to basic services, and are particularly vulnerable to shocks and stresses that perpetuate the intergenerational cycle of extreme poverty. Trickle Up brings awareness to these injustices and helps amplify the voices people in extreme poverty.

4. **Structural Barriers:** Trickle Up reaches people other poverty alleviation organizations and government programs overlook. Often, health care, financial services, and government programs are inaccessible for people living in extreme poverty. By partnering with governments and large organizations, Trickle Up helps create connections between excluded populations and existing institutions to ensure the poorest and most vulnerable are included in their programming.

5. **Effectiveness of Poverty Programs:** To ensure issues facing people living in extreme poverty are effectively addressed, Trickle Up influences governments and global institutions by advocating for the adoption and replication of our approach. We build the capacity of our local partners to ensure that expertise stays in the communities where it’s needed, long after a specific project ends.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:**

Support women entrepreneurs in the developing world as they start their own businesses, raise their voices in their households and communities, and build brighter futures for their families. Learn more, make a donation, and join our community at: [www.trickleup.org](http://www.trickleup.org).

**A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:**

Arpita Mandal from West Bengal, India shares her story of success: “My dream is to have land of my own with a pond where I can cultivate fish and my children can have a permanent home. Before, we faced so many problems. Eating two meals a day was something we could never even dream of. Our children’s education was out of the question. We used to live on the other side of the river, but a flood destroyed everything. First, the people from Trickle Up sat with us. The training they gave was very detailed. They explained about forming a group. Then, they gave us 9,000 rupees [$180]. I had two goats, so I bought two more and 10 hens. My animals have multiplied to 18 goats and 50 hens. I’ve saved 15,000 rupees [$233]. I have learned about banking and being independent. My group invests in different things. Today, most of my income is from my incense business. I’ve learned to face problems on my own. When I speak in my group, people listen. I have a strong voice now. My children are going to school now. Everything is going in a good direction.”

Read her full story: [https://trickleup.org/portfolio/arpitas-dream/](https://trickleup.org/portfolio/arpitas-dream/).
saving and gain access to income-generating opportunities. Through country offices, affiliates and partners, WfWI’s work is focused in these countries: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kosovo, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), Nigeria, Rwanda and South Sudan.

THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:

1. **Women’s Economic Empowerment**: Women learn skills that enable them to earn and save money. On average, women report daily personal earnings of $1.07 after graduation, compared to $0.34 at enrollment.

2. **Women’s Social Empowerment**: Women learn about their rights and gain the confidence to raise their voices. As a result, 91% report participating in their family’s financial decisions after graduation, compared to 63% at enrollment.

3. **Women’s Health and Wellbeing**: Women learn about a wide range of health topics, including personal hygiene, nutrition, and family planning. With 87% reporting practicing family planning after graduation, compared to 30% at enrollment.

4. **Connecting Women to Networks of Support**: Women are connected to each other through business associations, cooperatives, and savings groups. As a result, they are more likely to share knowledge and grow together, with 89% reporting educating another woman about their rights after graduation, compared to 10% at enrollment.

5. **Engaging Men as Allies for Women’s Empowerment**: WfWI trains male leaders and members of communities to ensure that they are supporters of women’s equality.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Sign up to sponsor a woman survivor of war so she can gain the tools she needs to rebuild her life. Learn more about our work at womenforwomen.org.

Join us online:
- Twitter: @WomenforWomen (https://twitter.com/womenforwomen)
- Facebook: @WomenforWomen (https://www.facebook.com/womenforwomen)
- Instagram: @WomenforWomen (https://www.instagram.com/womenforwomen)

A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:

Zarin, a 34-year-old mother of five in Afghanistan, struggled in poverty and without access to jobs, but she always had big dreams for her children. She decided to join WfWI’s program after she learned about it from other women in her community.

“During the year, I gained a lot of experience. I learned how to do business. I learned about women’s health and how to protect our health and be clean,” Zarin says.

Today, Zarin has opened a tailoring shop in a crowded market in Kabul, something uncommon for Afghan women. She not only pays her eldest daughter’s university fees and supports her family but also employs six other women.
We do this so that refugee and displaced women, children, and youth:
• Are safe, healthy, and self-reliant
• Have their human rights respected and protected
• Inform and drive their own solutions and development

THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING:

1. Advance the social and economic opportunity for displaced women and girls so they can forge new and innovative paths that better meet their unique needs inherent with the changing nature of today’s refugee crisis
2. Ensure access to reproductive health services for women and girls in conflict and crisis settings
3. Advance the protections and services for adolescent girls and displaced persons with disabilities
4. Lead the way in ensuring that addressing gender based violence – from prevention to response – is a global humanitarian response priority
5. Identify human rights abuses and promote the humane treatment of women, children, and families seeking protection in the U.S.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

WRC is a solutions-oriented organization that is proud to work directly with displaced women and girls so they can forge their own path toward self-reliance. We are a leading authority on gender equality and humanitarian response and partner with displaced women to leverage their skills and capacities to ensure a humanitarian response that best addresses their unique needs. We invite you to help advance the resilience of refugee women, by giving generously to the Women’s Refugee Commission.

A STORY ABOUT OUR WORK:

WRC has been proud to work alongside Mina Jaf, a refugee from Iraqi Kurdistan, founder of the Women Refugee Route, and a 2016 Women’s Refugee Commission Voice of Courage honoree. Mina fled with her family as a child to Denmark where they were granted asylum. The WRC sponsored Mina to speak at high level public fora including the United Nations General Assembly in 2016 to provide direct refugee voice input into the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. There she shared her story of determination and resilience and sought to hold accountable the policy makers that shape the humanitarian response that impacts displaced women and girls around the world. A grassroots activist for the rights of female refugees, Mina now runs an NGO that works to empower refugees to become self-advocates. In January 2018, Mina was named to Forbes’ “30 Under 30 in Europe.”
Women’s World Banking, One billion women around the world do not have access to a bank, not even a simple savings account. This is where Women’s World Banking comes in. We’re a global nonprofit working with financial service providers, governments and investors to promote women’s financial inclusion, so they can build security and prosperity for themselves and their families.

1. **Women-centered design:** We believe that knowing women and the context within which they make financial decisions is crucial to designing solutions that better serve their needs. We utilize behavioral and human-centered design techniques to achieve exactly that. In particular, in the past year, we have used a wide range of techniques such as behavioral mapping, ideation, user testing, iterative design and A/B testing to develop, iterate and improve on solutions to help low-income women better engage with financial services and products—from digital savings in Nigeria and Pakistan to digital microinsurance in Cambodia.

2. **Digital financial services for women:** As digital and mobile tools become more and more accessible to even the most remote and developing markets, digital financial services represent a huge opportunity to close the gender gap in financial inclusion and provide a solution for unbanked women. With digital technology, a woman, who may not have otherwise had access, can open a bank account in her own name. She can plan for her future and the future of her family, build a safety net for times of crisis, and even grow her business with access to loans and other offerings from the bank.

3. **Accelerating opportunity for women:** The International Finance Corporation estimates that approximately 65% of women-led small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in developing economies are either unerved or underserved financially. For a women entrepreneur, this means the odds are already stacked against the growth potential of her business. Giving women access to credit and other financial tools will not only help those businesses. For example, innovative credit scoring models can remove a common barrier to finance for women who often have difficulty providing the documentation required for traditional bank loans. Governments can help by instituting regulation that allows the evaluation of credit worthiness using alternative data points.

4. **Gender-lens investing:** Women’s World Banking’s Capital Partners Fund is the only women-focused, women-managed microfinance equity fund in the impact investing space. By investing in women-focused financial inclusion companies, the fund combines three approaches of gender-lens investing: 1) prioritizing financial inclusion companies that meet the definition of “women-owned;” 2) targeting financial inclusion companies that are achieving standards of gender diversity at staff, management and board levels, and 3) ensuring that investees promote gender equality through the financial products and services they provide to women clients.

5. **Leadership and diversity:** As financial services become more widespread and markets become more competitive, even well-established financial institutions need to ensure they are prepared to meet the needs of low-income clients. Yet, research shows that there is little management or leadership training for senior leaders of financial institutions serving low-income women. Women’s World Banking’s suite of leadership and diversity programs supports institutions to develop innovative financial products and services, and create inclusive workplaces to attract and retain diverse talent, so that they can better serve the low-income women’s market segment.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:**
Visit the Women’s World Banking website where you can learn more about our work, subscribe to our newsletter, and support our mission to bring financial services to women and girls around the world.