INVESTING IN WOMEN & GIRLS

Find out how partnerships between NGOs like Vital Voices and corporations like ExxonMobil are helping women like Jacqueline Dongmo Nguedia become successful business leaders.

CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS AROUND THE WORLD

Banking on women
Economic empowerment

Creating opportunities to fulfill potential

The ripple effect
The power of girls’ education
Challenges

Every day, women around the world show us with their ingenuity and persistence that they know how to make change happen.

U sing their minds, they raise seemingly small opportunities that, with time, yield big results. At CARE, our experience has shown us that empowered girls and women will move mountains in the fight against poverty. Last fall, I traveled to Niger and spent time with an extraordinary group of women who, with CARE’s help, began creating a network of village savings and loan groups 20 years ago. These women build savings accounts and loan money to each other to start small businesses. This successful program has become a national movement whose leaders have taken on powerful roles in Nigerien government and civil society. “When I met these amazing women, they were gathered to plan how to expand the role of women in Niger’s government. It was a serious meeting, but also a joyful celebration filled with music, dancing, and infectious optimism—optimism born of their long track record of success turning pennies into political power. Thanks to village savings and loan groups, many of these women are making decisions for themselves and for their families for the first time in their lives.

A world of opportunity

Can you imagine reaching middle age without ever having made a single financial decision? Before joining CARE’s village savings and loan program, several of the women were not even allowed to socialize with other women. Tradition in much of Niger dictated that wives didn’t leave the house except to help their husbands. Now, after seeing how women’s financial empowerment benefits entire households and communities, men are encouraging their wives and daughters to join village savings and loan groups. Men have even helped elect some of the women group leaders to local political offices. At the meeting I attended last fall, politicians from across Niger’s political spectrum literally stood in line to court the political support of these women. It was an incredible sight.

In the coming years, as we witness entire families and communities pulling themselves out of poverty, they will be standing on the shoulders of these incredible women.

Dr. Helen D. Gogol
President/CEO, CARE

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Amnesty of women

It is not acceptable that as women live in the West, enjoying the freedoms women before fought for, that we do not rally, advocate, and work to ensure that women EVERYWHERE have these freedoms.

It is not enough to shout about the injustice done to women across the globe. Action is the key. As women, we must act. As mothers, sisters, daughters, we must act. We must build schools, train, employ, and support women, provide education and health care to women, and advocate against violence and mutilation practices. Action is a forward momentum, an effort to make a change. Little steps by the masses create large ripples that change lives.

Robert Kennedy stated, “One person can make a difference and EVERYONE must try.” One woman on her own can change several lives of the communities. An army of committed women can change the world. 
“One woman on her own can change several lives. An army of committed women can change the world.”
Investing in the education and empowerment of girls and women has a rippling effect of positive change—it has been shown to decrease HIV/AIDS rates, increase GDP, decrease infant, child, and maternal mortality, and increase civic participation.

At Intel, we use a fully integrated and cross-functional approach that moves from the top of the house of investing in girls and women,” says Shelly Esque, vice president of Intel’s Education Group. “The Intel Foundation believes an investment in a girl’s education is an investment in economic development and health for her, her family, her community and her country. Through global Intel programs, more than 400,000 girls have been directly engaged in learning life skills and have gained the ability to advocate for themselves and their communities—essential to finding a path from poverty to opportunity and health.”

Unlikely partners, profound impact

Now that there is an understanding of the reasons why there is a need for investments in girls and women, there is a groundswell of interest in developing and sustaining programs in the field, socially responsible companies and individuals have been drawn to the cause. And we’re doing it all in a strategic and coordinated way, by focusing on the “sweet spot”—where the biggest needs on the ground converge with the best skills and assets that businesses can bring. That means a focus on the priority areas of empowering women and girls, health, education and economic empowerment, changing men’s attitudes and behaviors toward women, and reducing gender-based violence.

The partnership is led by the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GBC) and the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, which works with corporations, foundations, governments, international organizations and research institutions. The partnership is led by the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GBC) and the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, which works with corporations, foundations, governments, international organizations and research institutions.

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AN EDUCATED GIRL WILL
STAY HEALTHY.
SAVE MONEY.
BUILD A BUSINESS.
EMPOWER HER COMMUNITY.
LIFT HER COUNTRY.
CHANGE THE WORLD.

10x10 is a global campaign to improve the lives of girls.
10x10 is harnessing the power of media to inform, engage and mobilize.
10x10 is driving action.
WHEN YOU CHANGE A GIRL’S LIFE, YOU BEGIN TO CHANGE THE WORLD.

TAKE ACTION. LEARN MORE. JOIN US.
10x10act.org | facebook.com/10x10act

INTEL IS PROUD TO BE A 10x10 PARTNER as part of our long-term commitment to empowering girls and women through education, technology and economic opportunity. Learn more about Intel’s programs for Girls and Women at www.intel.com/go/women
In a place like Malawi, a small country in East Africa, achieving an education, especially for girls, is a major accomplishment, and teachers are a rare and precious commodity.

The country has been ravaged by HIV and AIDS. Climate change has caused unpredictable weather and lengthened an annual period of drought known as “the hungry season,” when school children are too weak to focus on lessons. Periods of drought known as the El Niño phenomenon can reduce rainfall that drenches us, she recounts her odyssey.

As she recounts her odyssey, Ms. Gama, 37, sits on a small mat on the earthen floor working on a lesson plan by candlelight. Growing up in this area, Ms. Gama always wanted to be a teacher. A child of poverty herself, her parents sold peanuts and the family goat to put her through school. Despite these obstacles, education in Malawi has come a long way since free primary schools were introduced in 1944. Enrollment has jumped 70 percent since then.

According to Norman Tembo, education coordinator for CARE, a global poverty-fighting organization, change starts with a collective responsibility “The best way to make a difference is to forge ahead and fill critical gaps,” he says. “The situation doesn’t have one-size-fits-all solutions.”

Over recent years, Norman has been working tirelessly with the Ministry of Education to develop a national strategy for community participation. Closer to the trenches, he and his staff work with communities to control over crop production and demonstrate ways to grow more—even when it rains little.

For example, whole communities are now organizing themselves to dig Olympic pool-sized reservoirs. The stored water is used to irrigate ponds, providing more protein in their diets and greater peace of mind in their households. Nationally, around 90 percent of Malawian’s debt was forgiven in 2006, making more money available to invest in education and other development programs rather than pay interest. As the government partners with outside organizations like CARE, more families will start to view education in a different light. Students will be able to access their academic goals. Those who desperately want to go to secondary school and on to college will be rewarded for their hard work and good grades. Then they will have a fighting chance to get diplomas and realize their dreams of becoming accountants, doctors—and the next generation of teachers.

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Click-to-commit every day to help General Mills and Merck donate up to $900,000 by December 31, 2011, so girls in Malawi can build a brighter future for themselves and their families.

LIKE us on facebook now, facebook.com/joinmyvillage to start committing corporate donations.

Keep coming back to Click-to-Commit on JoinMyVillage.com
An extra year of education can increase a girls’ income by 10 to 20%.

Meet the emerging ‘philanthro-teens’: the new face of philanthropy in the United States.

Today’s youth can change the way America views the next generation. They are globally aware, want to get involved with international humanitarian issues, and identify with commercial brands that are socially responsible.

Tweens Jillian and Sydney Medina are fourth-graders in New Jersey. Jillian participates in her school’s math league and loves playing basketball. Sydney is a dancer, plays guitar and violin, and loves to write and draw. At an early age, Jillian and Sydney decided to help girls around the world and engage friends in that effort. At their birthday, rather than presents, they asked people to donate to Girl Up, a United Nations Foundation campaign that helps American girls and women transform their communities. The campaign aims to raise awareness and funds for United Nations programs that help girls in developing countries.

The twins’ story is not an isolated case. Research shows a high level of charitable engagement among today’s girls. A survey of girls ages 13-18 found that 79 percent had donated food, clothes, or household items to charities in the previous year. Seventy-six percent had donated money to help others. More than half (51 percent) had donated their own money, while nearly three-quarters (76 percent) had raised money or asked friends and family members to volunteer.

Ten-year-old Katherine Com- mello of Pennsylvania shows how powerful this trend can be. When Katherine learned from her mother that the dangers malaria poses for many kids around the world, she wanted to help. Kather- ine started making gift certificates to raise $10 at a time—enough to purchase an anti-malaria bed net. She delivers it to a family in Africa, and educate communities about its importance and use—through Nothing But Nets. For its part, a global, grass- roots campaign to end malaria in Africa, where a child dies every 45 seconds from the disease. From that starting point, Kath- erine and her family have raised more than $2,000 over the years to send life-saving bed nets to families in Africa. Their hard work is helping thousands of children sleep safely.

The virtuous cycle this generation can see. As these girls do so much, investing in them can help harness their great potential and advance their impact on their families, communities and countries—not to men- tions themselves.

So what is needed? An equitable access to quality pri- mary and secondary education, vocational and agricultural training—by girls and women—that are meaningful in rural economies.

Access to quality health infor- mation and services. Adequate nutrition, with a par- ticular focus on reducing anemia, so rural adolescent girls can learn, grow, and act.

Personal security—at home, in the community, and online. Social connections with peers and role models, particularly adult women, to support rural girls’ learning and empowerment to pursue their goals and act on their choices.

Training and opportunities for non-farm employment so rural young women can pursue employ- ment to raise rural family incomes and sustain rural communities. Equitable access to assets, such as land, credit, and savings, is necessary to capitalize on these opportunities.

Philanthro-teen: The next generation changing the world.
We’re Sharing Our Hearts!

Hearts For Hearts Girls represents real girls in the US and all over the world, who advocate, help their communities, and change the world one heart at a time. A portion of the purchase price goes to our charity partner, World Vision, who helps girls in need in the regions represented by the dolls. Our website entertains, educates, and empowers, so girls and their families are proud to be part of this new movement. You can be, too!

To learn more, visit www.hearts4heartsgirls.com

Check out our H4HG games at the iTunes App Store!
**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**Tanzania in January 2011.**

Photo: courtesy of Eve's

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In Africa, a preg-

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Ob-gyns are dedicated to helping you have a healthy and successful pregnancy and a positive birth experience. We provide comprehensive health care and see you through every phase of life—from adolescence, through the reproductive years, and into menopause and beyond.

We’re here to keep you healthy for a lifetime.

www.acog.org
Question: How does Jacqueline Dongmo Nguedia succeed in a man’s world?

Answer: Through integrity, discipline and determination.

Carving out a business career in Cameroon

As a businesswoman, Jacqueline Dongmo Nguedia started young.

“When I was still in primary school I used to sell almost everything that could be sold,” she says. “I set up my first formal business when I was 23 years old.”

Today, Dongmo oversees a substantial conglomerate of “trifles,” as she calls them, in the west African nation of Cameroon. But there’s little trifling about the collection of companies she’s built. They transport and distribute petroleum products and beverages and are also active in construction and construction equipment. Together, they have annual revenues of almost US$40 million and employ some 350 people.

Dongmo’s success is all the more remarkable when you consider that Cameroon has a per capita income of less than US$1,100, the law giving a woman the authority to register a business without her husband’s consent was enacted only in 1990, and the Economist Intelligence Unit ranks Cameroon 105 out of 113 countries in terms of overall economic opportunity for women.

The principles behind her success

When Dongmo talks, however, the idea of adversity pops like a bubble. “I do not like being called a ‘successful woman’ because I think all women have in them what it takes to succeed. I decided to invest in this ‘male dominated’ business without really thinking about it; I just felt I should do it. Generally, I am a fine observer of market dynamics and I move where opportunities to increase revenue present themselves.”

Dongmo credits her success to her father (“He always made me feel that I could achieve whatever I desired”), her family (“The reason why I live”), and her three “essential principles”—integrity, discipline and determination. “It’s about perseverance, endurance and resilience in what I seek to achieve.”

She also believes in helping others. As a founding member of the Cameroonian branch of the Africa Business Women’s Network (ABWN), she has helped the organization, launched in partnership with NGO Vital Voices and ExxonMobil, grow to more than 7,000 members and reach more than 21,500 women across the continent with programs focused on business training and capacity-building, advocacy support and business-to-business initiatives.

“The greatest obstacle that prevents women entrepreneurs from seizing the opportunity to partner with multinational companies is not access to finance, but access to information,” she says. “Information equips you to be daring and take risks. Making this opportunity available to women-owned businesses will contribute to social justice because it has been proven that women tend to invest their revenue in their families and communities, so accelerating women’s economic empowerment will lead to improved quality of life in communities in Africa.”

“We believe networks like ABWN are powerful tools for advancing women economically,” says Suzanne McCarron, President of the ExxonMobil Foundation. “By creating more economic opportunities for women, we can help improve their lives and strengthen communities.”

For her part, Dongmo advises young women to “believe in themselves and start their businesses with whatever they have in order to grow a step at a time” and “to be mindful of keeping a healthy balance between work and life, including families, and remember that there is no opportunity that should lead one to compromise her value system.”

DAVID DUFFY
editorial@mediaplanet.com
Connecting women with technology — it’s one of the wisest investments we can make.

By increasing their access to technology, women are able to improve their standard of living, strengthen their families and communities and contribute to significant global progress.

That’s why ExxonMobil is committed to identifying and deploying promising tools and technologies that have the potential to improve women’s lives in the developing world.

With our partners, the International Center for Research on Women, Ashoka’s Changemakers and Thunderbird Emerging Markets Laboratory, we are supporting high impact, sustainable innovations that advance economic opportunities for thousands of women around the world.

Technology has the power to transform the lives of women and their communities. We’re proud to help make this happen.

The story continues at exxonmobil.com/womensinitiative
**Growing up too soon**

What inspired you to become such a passionate advocate on the issue of child marriage?

From the moment the Elders were brought together by Nelson Mandela in 2007, equality for girls and women has been at the heart of our efforts. Inspired by Mandela’s vision, we decided to hold, we decided we should try to address the sensitive issue of faith and tradition affecting women. Child marriage, driven by tradition and poverty, affects millions of girls and women every year. We want to help end this practice that affects millions of girls every year.

When undertaking initiatives, the Elders are committed to listening to a wide range of voices. They seek to build, advocate and defend the rights of women and girls and their families, communities and governments around the world.

What is the current status of child marriage around the world?

Child marriage is very common yet rarely spoken about. One in three girls in the developing world is married before she is 18 and one in seven marriages by 15. At this rate 100 million girls will become child brides over the next decade. These girls are presumed to prove their fertility as soon as she is 15. She is also likely to drop out of school, reducing her opportunities for employment. Child marriage perpetuates poverty and suffering.

What can people do to support this cause?

Ending child marriage requires a change in attitude by whole communities. However, because so few dare to speak out, activists and the girls affected feel a tremendous sense of isolation— it is here that we can help.

The Elders are building a global alliance to help grassroots, national and international organizations to collaborate. We encourage you to visit our website—www.The Elders.org—to learn more about the efforts of child marriage and to talk about it with friends and family. By breaking the taboo that surrounds it, together we can help to ensure that ending child marriage becomes an international priority.

**Marriage vs. pregnancy: Reasons why school-age girls stop attending school**

**SPEAK OUT AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE**

This is the lament of Qulsum, an Afghan woman who shared her story with Women for Women International as part of a year-long process of learning new lessons about her rights and potential to rebuild her life.

Yet many of the millions of girls forced into child marriage are not able to overcome these extreme obstacles and become educated, contributing members of society. In many of the countries where Women for Women International works, adolescent girls are married between the ages of 13-15, often having many children before they themselves are adults. It is all but impossible for them to realize their dreams of studying and becoming businesswomen, teachers, doctors, and leaders, meaning their communities and economies will not benefit from their contributions. In Sudan, a country on the edge of historic changes, 46 percent of girls are not enrolled in school, and 50 percent of the young women in our programs are married. Medical complications from pregnancy are the leading cause of death among young women ages 15-19, and their infants are usually far less healthy than babies born to adults.

The severe consequences of child marriage are harmful to not only girls, but their families, communities and economies as well.

When I got married, I was in the 8th grade. At the time it was not acceptable for me to leave school and marry—my family forced me to marry. I have always felt a big pain in my heart for having an incomplete education, particularly whenever I meet school teachers; I had wanted to become a teacher.
In November 2010, I was fortunate enough to travel to rural Bangladesh and talk shop with Afia Afroze, a community health worker trained to diagnose and treat childhood killers like pneumonia and diarrhea.

I felt like I already knew her as she is featured on our campaign website, www.GoodGoes.org. Four years ago, her community nominated her for health worker training and she gladly agreed as she was keen to learn useful ideas for raising her own newborn healthfully and to serve the community. Her husband tossed in how proud he was to see the children she saved and the respect she gained. He told me that she was called the lady “doctor” by many in the village. Her logbook showed that each month she screened seven or more children for pneumonia and treated three to four cases of dehydrating diarrhea and visited one to two newborns.

As we walked the mud pathways and she stopped at houses to check the infants for signs of infection, I towered over Afia even though I am only just over five feet. Yet, despite her short stature, you could tell that in her four years of service, she had become a giant in her village of 200 homes and she smiled proudly with her health kit across her shoulder as she headed home after another day of “doctoring.”

Women helping women

Where do American mothers turn when they have concerns about their newborns?

From pediatricians and free dial-a-nurse services to mommy blogs and “What to Expect When You’re Expecting,” the resources are endless. But for millions of new mothers in the developing world, a dearth of information, services and health care workers can cause easily treatable illnesses like diarrhea to be fatal for their children.

Globally, there is a three to four million shortfall of health workers and 200 million children don’t have access to basic care. And since a lack of health care workers and childhood mortality are highly correlated, countries with the fewest workers per capita—such as Sierra Leone and Mozambique—can lose as many as one in five children.

Train locally

“Health worker” does not only mean highly trained doctors, nurses or even midwives, and there is a push to train community health workers who can provide basic services and information. And because many cultures view pregnancy and childbirth as private times in a woman’s life, female caregivers are in great demand.

“In many countries, a mother isn’t allowed out of the home for the first 42 days of her baby’s life,” says Mary Beth Powers, Save the Children’s newborn and child survival campaign chief. “Only a female health worker can penetrate the curtain that surrounds the mom and baby, and ensure we don’t lose them to something like sepsis.”

Spread globally

Powers says making trained female fieldworkers accessible (especially in rural areas) has helped countries like Nepal and Malawi reduce their maternal and under-five mortality rates. As a result, it’s an initiative her organization and many others are pressing the international community to support.

HELP ONE. SAVE MANY.
See where the good goes at GoodGoes.org
She's a farmer in Kenya, whose maize crops help feed her family, too. To better support her family, she decided to market her work—she’s a garment factory worker in India who wants to move beyond her entry-level position—just for herself, but to better support her family.

She’s a seamstress in Cambodia who makes traditional Cambodian handwoven fabrics. If she could market her work to tourists, she believes she could afford to send all her children to school.

Each represents the reality of life for many women in developing countries. Women work hard—indoors, outdoors, at street corners. Women are often undervalued or unstructured. Their chance to develop skills that many people today take for granted—open a bank account, read, make personal decisions, negotiate wages—could set them on a path to a better life. In the labor market specifically, women’s status is significantly inferior to that of men. They tend to be concentrated in the informal economy, working as day laborers on farms and construction sites, domestic servants or petty traders. While such informal sector jobs can make up more than 50 percent of the labor market, they are characterized by low pay, low security and few opportunities to advance.

More than ever, the world now realizes that when women are denied the chance to contribute to economic, political and social life, the entire society pays a price.

In developing countries, many women’s ability to reach their full potential is often stunted by barriers to opportunities that could set them on a path to a better life. The labor market specifically, women’s experience of the largest reduction in poverty rates.

The Sidiq family needed help now. If only they could come up with a plan that would allow her to earn more money while staying within the new regime’s rules, Kamila thought, she could take the pressure off Haji Khair.

She felt just how much her family needed her, and knew she had to find a way to do her part. Dr. Khair, Malika’s mother, owned the Sidiq family’s apartment and used it as an office, and had managed to do just that: she was a doctor who was still able to practice medicine, despite the restrictions. As long as no men entered her office and all her patients were female, her clinic had no problems from the Taliban.

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Gap Inc.’s P.A.C.E. program – Personal Advancement and Career Enhancement – has helped thousands of female garment workers in the developing world. The P.A.C.E. program is just one thread of Gap Inc.'s commitment to advancing women to advance the world.

Learn more at www.gapinc.com/socialresponsibility
In Blantyre, Malawi, dozens of women sell potatoes in the bazaars and markets. Mwosowa and her business partner Betty Louhana stand out.

Frustrated by their small profit margins, they became the first women to take the bold move of becoming distributors of a local market. Every two weeks, they withdraw money from their savings account to rent a truck. They hire a driver and spend several days on the road to get potatoes directly from farmers, which they then sell to the vendors.

Before Grace had access to a savings account, she kept her hard-earned money hidden in her home. Now with her biometric-enabled card, Grace can safely deposit and easily access her money at a banking kiosk just 100 meters from her home. She no longer worries about someone stealing her money or keeping it hidden in her home.

The ability to save money in a secure place, and to own interest instead of paying it, is crucial to the success of women like Grace. Unfortunately, a large majority of the women in developing world are forced to keep what little money they may have in cash because they do not own property.

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Frustrated by their small profit margins, they became the first women to take the bold move of becoming distributors of a local market. Every two weeks, they withdraw money from their savings account to rent a truck. They hire a driver and spend several days on the road to get potatoes directly from farmers, which they then sell to the vendors.

Before Grace had access to a savings account, she kept her hard-earned money hidden in her home. Now with her biometric-enabled card, Grace can safely deposit and easily access her money at a banking kiosk just 100 meters from her home. She no longer worries about someone stealing her money or keeping it hidden in her home.

The ability to save money in a secure place, and to own interest instead of paying it, is crucial to the success of women like Grace. Unfortunately, a large majority of the women in developing world are forced to keep what little money they may have in cash because they do not own property.
With a safe place to save, financial training and a business loan from Opportunity International, Judith Godiah’s life began to change.

A few years ago, her business was struggling, meals were meager and school fees were hard to come by. Then Judith worked with Opportunity to open an electronics store in Bungoma, Kenya. Through courage and hard work, she now saves profits from a growing business. And every day, she walks her well-fed children to school.

Two million people like Judith are using Opportunity savings accounts and other financial services to change their children’s futures. Every day, millions more are looking for their opportunity.

create change today
visit opportunity.org/change
I would encourage companies to endorse and take steps to improve the Women’s Empowerment Principles, a joint initiative of UN Women, the UN Global Compact, and the World Bank, which provide a concrete set of key factors to promote gender equality in the workplace and across markets and communities. The Principles outline tools, techniques and practices companies can use to analyze and assess initiatives while benchmarking and reporting on progress. I would also encourage companies to measure their success in those areas. Companies that do will find that more women on their boards, more women in senior management, and more programs to empower women will translate into bottom line business success.

They can measure real differences made in value—or better—jobs, better health, higher income, more options, more control of finances, and reduced harms. Data on the impact of women and girls programs is limited. Companies that are part of their philanthropic efforts, invest in sound systems to measure results on the cutting edge. It is especially important to make longer term investments. Research shows that it takes from three to 10 years before seeing the longer term positive impact on families, businesses and communities. Companies can also set a positive example (and be pioneers) by enhancing their business practice tracking systems to include the success measures that matter most for women's improvement in wages, promotions, flexibility in the workplace.

I would encourage investors to take advantage of the girls' education trend. When the world delivers girls' education, it makes a difference. The challenges affecting developing countries are too complex for any one sector to solve. Governments are essential, but partnerships and NGOs bring complementary skills and can also play important roles in working with private sector partners, including community-based organizations, global NGOs, universities and government agencies on a range of programs to support and enhance these efforts. It's our responsibility to integrate and coordinate our efforts so that our successes are more than the sum of their parts.

I think it has become a much higher priority in the Obama White House and also in Secretary Clinton’s State Department, which recently released the first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), which includes unprecedented emphasis on the central role of women and girls in effective development and diplomacy.

ICRW’s research shows that broad-based partnerships that break sectoral boundaries are critical ingredients in achieving successful outcomes for women’s empowerment. Different players—governments, private sector, civil society, international institutions—and a single sector has the unique opportunity to facilitate Partnership leverage broader reach and resources to yield wider legacies. Making strides in this area has launched eight major innovations and found that a critical mass of development, private sector partnerships, and civil society actors can be a transformative force in the well-being and empowerment of millions of women.

The creation of the White House Council on Women and Girls and the state Department’s Office of Global Women’s Issues has helped elevate the importance of this issue on the global stage. We’ve worked in the past with the State Department—for example on the Middle East and North Africa Business Network’s and the Activism Network—for example on the Middle East and North Africa Business Network’s and the Activism Network for Women’s Empowerment Program—and we look forward to working with women from around the US government in the years ahead.

The current mood of corporations is that it’s a top priority. We look forward to seeing how these policies and programs are making to the qualitative improvements in the lives of women and girls.

Today there is a strong consensus among international development experts that the status and role of women is an excellent clue to a nation’s growth potential—that investing in women and girls is a key strategy for alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development.

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Across Africa, land is integral to identity and existence. For women, access to and ownership of land is often problematic, particularly when the law and culture collide.

Culture, women’s rights and the lie of the land

Land issues, including family property matters, are often determined within entrenched cultural norms where a hybrid legal interpretation of both customary and national law is applied.

In spearheading efforts to secure women’s rights to land in Africa, the Commonwealth Secretariat focuses on reconciling customary norms with more formal judicial processes, national laws and international and regional human rights standards to address both policy imperatives and realities on the ground.

In many African countries, formal bodies established for the management and administration of land also acknowledge the role played by traditional authorities in the adjudication of land disputes. This is why a rural woman struggling to gain access to her late husband’s land may have to skillfully negotiate the restrictions imposed by culture even though by law, the land is rightfully hers.

Becoming aware

Between 2006 and 2010, the Commonwealth Secretariat conducted a series of regional and national meetings in Cameroon, Namibia, Kenya and Nigeria to address the issue of women’s rights, culture and the law. They drew together the rich experience of local and national officials, women’s activists, traditional leaders, judges and rural and indigenous women.

It became clear that the predominantly rural women trying to access justice in relation to land ownership need to better understand their rights and how to realize these rights. At the same time, it became apparent that traditional authority and leadership also require information on land laws and their application within cultural contexts when they attempt to dispense justice on rural women’s claims to land.

Kenyan Judge Sarah Ondeyo explains: “Rural women don’t have the capacity to enforce their rights in court and suffer discrimination in terms of land inheritance. It affects all women, but especially rural women, many of whom are illiterate and living in poverty. There is a lack of awareness of their rights and basic things like the distances they have to travel to court to access justice are a barrier.”

As a result, the Commonwealth Secretariat is developing a legal handbook for use in four Commonwealth African jurisdictions which will guide them through the processes at grassroots level, with a CD version in local languages. The handbook will also help traditional leaders, provincial officials and lay magistrates to enable women’s rights to land.

The handbook will be published this year and draws upon the experiences of professionals like Judge Ondeyo who know the realities of life for women caught between culture and the law.

Women agents of change

Every day, in villages, towns and cities all over the Commonwealth, ambitious, determined and courageous women and girls are transforming their lives, as well as the lives of others.

Invest in women

Dr. Neera Sidhu
Advisor (Gender), Social Transformation Programmes Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Ms. Sarah Coleman
Acting Advisor, Criminal Law Section, Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Women are better poised to improve their lives when they own land and other assets. Yet just 1% of the world’s women own land.
Four million people—largely women—are victimized by intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

On average, more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in the U.S. every day.

The costs of intimate partner violence exceed $5.8 billion each year, $4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health care services.

On average each day in the United States, these women are killed by a current or former intimate partner and 1,200 women are raped or sexually assaulted. Intimate partner violence occurs at alarming rates regardless of age, race or gender identity, income level, ethnicity, and educational background.

Many survivors of domestic violence escape abuse but are re-victimized by their former partners who stalk them and keep them living in fear. Three out of four stalking victims are stalked by someone they know, and nearly forty percent are stalked by an intimate partner or a friend, roommate, or neighbor.

Ending the cycle

To help end the cycles of violence, there are outreach against domestic and sexual violence in every state and U.S. territory. They are working hard to support more than 2,300 local programs that help survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

The National Network to End Domestic Violence found that 1,746 local domestic violence programs served more than 70,000 survivors and their children in one 24-hour period alone. During the same one-day count, more than 9,500 requests for services went unmet, largely due to lack of funding. These numbers tell the story of how an investment in programs on the ground can respond to, prevent, and end violence against women. The programs intervene in the lives of millions of survivors to help them escape abuse and rebuild their shattered lives. They have been very effective in reducing violence.

Life-saving programs

For direct, confidential support services:

- Call anyone (from any phone, even a cell phone) at the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-797-7171 (TTY)
- Visit Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
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For more information visit: www.endviolence.org

Women are 90%-95% more likely to suffer from domestic violence than men.

Each year, nearly 2.3 million people—largely women—are victimized by intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

The role of intimate partner violence and the costs of violence

Women are more likely to suffer from intimate partner violence and sexual violence than men.

According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1 in 4 women will be physically or sexually assaulted at some point in her lifetime. One out of every 14 women will be murdered by an intimate partner or a friend, roommate, or neighbor. At least two-thirds of all female murder victims are killed by their intimate partners or former partners. On average each day in the United States, women are killed by a current or former intimate partner and 1,200 women are raped or sexually assaulted. Intimate partner violence occurs at alarming rates regardless of age, race or gender identity, income level, ethnicity, and educational background.

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a new chapter

Domestic violence affects millions. But a single call could make the difference. Our HopeLine® program has given more than 100,000 cell phones to those who need a safer way to call for help. Verizon’s technology is helping stop domestic violence. And taking on more of the world’s to-do list. See how at verizon.com/responsibility.
Among the contributions women make to a company, stock performance may be the most overlooked.

The Pax World Global Women’s Equality Fund (PXWEX) is the only mutual fund in America to focus on investing in companies that are global leaders in advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment. The way we view it, when women are at the table, the discussion is richer, the decision-making process is better, the organization is stronger and the benefits are felt by everyone – including investors.

To learn more, visit www.paxworld.com/womensequality

Before investing in a Pax World fund, you should carefully consider the fund’s investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses. For this and other important information about the fund, please obtain a fund prospectus by calling 800.767.1729 or visiting www.paxworld.com. Please read it carefully before investing.

An investment in the fund involves risks, including loss of principal. Equity investments are subject to market fluctuations. The fund’s share price can fall because of weakness in the broad market, a particular industry, or specific holdings. Distributed by: ALPS Distributors, Inc. Member FINRA (03/11)