

# Investing in Women



Identifying opportunities for collective business action on women's empowerment

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**US\$300 million**

to support women's economic empowerment over the past decade.

SOURCE  
ICRW and Dalberg analysis of 32 corporate-funded programs. Based on publically available data. Represents current pool of funding including multi-year projects. Not all programs provided investment data.

## Introduction

BSR, in collaboration with the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), is pleased to announce the launch of our "Investing in Women" collaborative initiative in 2016. This cross-sector collaboration platform will provide companies with opportunities to share, learn, and design effective approaches to women's empowerment.

## Our Focus

Women's empowerment is now widely recognized as a critical pillar of sustainable global development. In particular, women's economic inclusion is seen as a pathway to large-scale poverty alleviation and wide-ranging improvements in health and social development for individuals, families, communities, and countries.

Evidence is also mounting that investing in women can improve business performance. Many studies have demonstrated the market opportunity women represent as suppliers, consumers, and workers in the global economy, as well as the benefit of gender diversity among employees, management, and leadership.<sup>1</sup>

Amidst this backdrop, companies have launched dozens of programs and invested well over US\$300 million to support women's economic empowerment over the past decade. The opportunities are clear: Businesses provide vast possibilities for women to be employed and receive essential job training; corporations offer potential for women-owned enterprises to connect to markets and participate in lucrative value chains; and the private sector has the power to design products and services specifically to enhance women's economic agency.

<sup>1</sup> Irina Nikolic and Lynn Taliento, McKinsey Associates 2010 "How Helping Women Helps Business" [http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/economic\\_studies/how\\_helping\\_women\\_helps\\_business](http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/economic_studies/how_helping_women_helps_business)

# Why Join? The collaboration will:

- 1** Assist companies to improve how they design and implement effective, integrated women's empowerment strategies.
- 2** Evaluate progress and results of women's programs more rigorously.
- 3** Build a community of shared learning across various sectors and geographies.
- 4** Identify opportunities for collective action on women's empowerment issues.
- 5** Identify partnerships to improve how programs are implemented on the ground.

## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



## Our Approach

The entire field of private sector investment in women's empowerment is still in its infancy. While many platforms exist among companies for dialogue about investing in women—from large conferences to smaller industry-specific forums—very few of these gatherings are dedicated to helping companies advance their commitments or improve their practices in concrete, collaborative ways.

What strategies work best? What innovations hold most promise? How can initiatives achieve greater impact by addressing more of the barriers facing women in their daily lives? How can new kinds of collaboration catalyze better results for women and business?

The Investing in Women Collaborative Initiative will ask and begin to answer these questions—we hope you will join us in the exciting work to push private sector investment in women's empowerment to new heights.

## Contact

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## For More Information

[www.bsr.org/en/collaboration](http://www.bsr.org/en/collaboration)



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