



Gender Lens Investing

For years, the women's funding movement and women's funds have been creating social change by [investing in women](#). People have been energized by the profound impact of investing in women and girls. Funders across the philanthropic spectrum including [Women Moving Millions](#), global giants such as [Nike](#) and [Goldman Sachs](#), and the [World Bank](#) are investing in girls and women.

We know that women are key assets in building their communities and creating new pathways to a more just and sustainable world. Investing in women's education, economic welfare, health and overall well-being produces powerful results that benefit families, communities and entire societies. When women become economic agents and leaders, social change accelerates and returns multiply. This is the [woman effect](#).

Currently, the world of financial services offers few vehicles that enable women and allies to move significant investment assets to support the woman effect. However, there is currently a growing group of investors, funds, and support organizations that are beginning to shape and leverage a gender lens.

I believe a gender lens creates a viewfinder for people to realize that societal and cultural norms have not put women in decision making positions, in solution spaces, or anywhere near access to capital. When you put on a gender lens you recognize that this investment in women hasn't happened and you then decide how you might view workplace equity, capital markets, and products and services that serve women differently. As Rachel Payne from Google said at the [Convergence](#) gathering last month, "I believe a gender lens creates the promise of a sustainable and viable financial system; a system that is most likely to yield the greatest returns across all dimensions; socially, financially, politically and economically."

In the past few years, funds and networks of investors that leverage a gender lens have been created and shaped including [Golden Seeds](#), [Karmijn Kapitaal](#), and [Texas Women Ventures](#) as well as [Women's World Banking's](#) Isis Fund in microfinance and [Root Capital's](#) gender inclusion work in financing the small and growing businesses in Latin America and Africa. Calvert launched the [Calvert Women's Principles](#) establishing the first Global Code of Corporate Conduct focused exclusively on empowering, advancing, and investing in women worldwide.

Kellogg Foundation has lived, studied, and produced a [report on investing for impact](#). Fellowship programs and consortia that focus on women social entrepreneurs are emerging, such as [Women Changemakers](#). Proven models for incubation, such as [Village Capital](#) and [Echoing Green](#), are paying attention to gender and thinking about how to better recruit and meet the needs of women entrepreneurs.

I recently became a founding community member of Criterion Venture's project on [Women Effect Investments](#) because I see the opportunity for more activists to empower and energize themselves around investing and this may be one entry point that lights them up – women! I also know there are more people and philanthropic institutions who want to see investment vehicles that reflect their social values. I encourage you to invest in projects that are including deliberate and fair practices in the areas of workplace equity, access to capital, and bringing products to market.

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