

Groundbreaking New Fund Launches to Support Women in Global Value Chains

An innovative funding model will lift up local solutions and build long-term resilience for women workers and communities.

Washington, D.C. — May 11, 2021 – A first-of-its-kind collaborative funding initiative, [the Resilience Fund for Women in Global Value Chains](#), launches today, bringing together corporate investors, foundations, and NGO partners to invest in the health, safety, and economic resilience of the women who form the backbone of global value chains. The Fund aims to raise at least US\$10 million in pooled funding over three years to support locally driven solutions to the systemic problems that make women more vulnerable to crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Resilience Fund is a joint initiative of BSR, the United Nations Foundation's Universal Access Project, and Women Win/Win-Win Strategies in close collaboration with founding corporate partners and investors Gap Foundation, PVH Foundation, H&M Foundation, and The VF Foundation. Today, the Ralph Lauren Corporate Foundation announced it will also join the Fund as a founding investor to support women workers in global supply chains.

This innovative collaboration provides unrestricted funds to organizations in the Global South — trusting local and regional women's funds, women-led organizations, and feminist leaders to know what their communities need and enabling them to direct resources to yield the strongest outcomes. The Fund is embarking on its first phase in South Asia, with planned expansions to additional regions by early 2022.

A representative advisory board places grassroots and feminist leaders as equal partners with investors in determining how funds should be expended, using real-time feedback and learning to respond flexibly to changing realities on the ground. Global Fund for Women, the Naz Foundation, Prospera International Network of Women's Funds, and Women's Fund Asia will serve as representatives of women's funds and grassroots women's organizations on the advisory board. The Fund is open to investors across a wide range of sectors, offering them the opportunity to build new, long-term connections with women's funds and locally-led organizations that focus on women's safety, security, and sexual and reproductive health as long-term drivers of economic resilience.

QUOTES FROM ACROSS THE PARTNERSHIP:

Diana Amini, Global Manager, H&M Foundation

"Women are uniquely and disproportionately harmed by the consequences of the pandemic. No company or organization will be able to drive this agenda on their own, partnerships that combine different perspectives, sectors, and kinds of knowledge is crucial. We are therefore proud to be part of this new initiative and collaboration, focusing on

both systemic change and innovative solutions with a clear bottom-up approach."

Maria Bobenrieth, Executive Director of Women Win/Win-Win Strategies

"It's exciting to see corporate foundations coming together to pool their resources to support women and girls in this novel way. The Fund is infusing new and needed resources into the ecosystem of women's funds and their model of change—tapping into trusted women-led grassroots organizations for design and delivery of locally-led action."

Alexandra Garita, Executive Director of Prospera International Network of Women's Funds

"Women's funds have legitimacy, trust, and strong relationships with girls and women's groups, organizations, and movements, and are effective partners in supporting local transformative action for human rights, health, and economic resilience. This Fund, with an innovative governance mechanism, will channel resources where they need to go—into women's hands—in sustained and meaningful ways."

Sally Gilligan, Chair of the Gap Foundation

"From the early stages of the pandemic, we knew that we had to leverage Gap Foundation's experience and resources to address this global challenge, but it became clear that a collective industry effort would produce greater impact at the scale required to address the immense hardship brought on by COVID-19. Building the Resilience Fund collaboratively with other corporate foundations and NGO partners enables us to maximize our investment while supporting new, locally-driven approaches to creating strong community resilience—allowing us to drive meaningful and systemic change."

Seema Jalan, Executive Director of the United Nations Foundation's Universal Access Project

"This is a new way to do corporate philanthropy. We're joining a growing movement that is challenging the traditional notion of solving problems through pre-ordained approaches or ideas of success. Instead, we're recognizing that transformative change comes from local organizations and feminist leaders who are driving priorities, strategies, and solutions."

Roseann Lynch, Head of the Ralph Lauren Corporate Foundation

"By coming together, we will open more doors to empower women and accelerate gender equality across the global value chain. We support the Resilience Fund's mission to scale locally-driven solutions that drive long-term, structural change for women around the world through economic resilience, health, and well-being."

Latanya Mapp Frett, President and CEO of Global Fund for Women

“At Global Fund for Women we believe in putting resources directly in the hands of local gender justice movements and change-makers. We are thrilled to be a part of this initiative supporting locally-led solutions by women in global value chains to build resilience amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Aditi Mohapatra, Managing Director at BSR

“Women, who are essential to the resilience, success, and sustainability of global value chains, have suffered the brunt of impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. This innovative new fund is an opportunity for companies to address these impacts by centering the voices of these women in identifying solutions for themselves and their communities. In doing so, companies have an opportunity to bring to life their commitments to equity and social justice.”

Marissa Pagnani McGowan, Chief Sustainability Officer, PVH Corp.

“The Resilience Fund is an opportunity for PVH to directly address the disproportionate impacts COVID-19 has had on women in supply chain communities, and empower them with the resources needed to move forward. This innovative fund will help strengthen women’s long-term economic resilience, health, and well-being and will revolutionize corporate philanthropy with its democratized and locally-driven approach. We’re excited to partner with our peers and NGO partners to maximize our collective impact and drive systemic change.”

Gloria Schoch, Executive Director, The VF Foundation

“The VF Foundation believes galvanizing our collective expertise, scale, and resources with like-minded partners combined with a locally-led, grassroots approach to corporate philanthropy will advance women and girls in powerful ways.”

Tulika Srivastava, Executive Director of Women’s Fund Asia

“The pandemic has disproportionately impacted women, girls, trans, and intersex people, exacerbating existing structural and power inequalities. But even as they have been hardest hit, they lead at the forefront of response to the crisis and are best situated to find solutions for their communities. This fund is an opportunity to give them the support they need to make change.”

Kalyani Subramanyam, Chief Operating Officer, The Naz Foundation (India) Trust

“There are many gaps in advancing gender equality and this calls for innovative solutions. We’ve seen some powerful initiatives at the grassroots which struggle without access to funds! I believe the Resilience Funds with its democratic style of governance can serve to be an extraordinary transformative opportunity that can accelerate equality, women’s leadership and economic empowerment.”

ABOUT THE RESILIENCE FUND

The Resilience Fund for Women in Global Value Chains is a first-of-its-kind pooled funding initiative for corporate and philanthropic investments in the long-term health, well-being, and economic resilience of women who form the backbone of global supply chains. The Fund was developed jointly by BSR, the United Nations Foundation’s Universal Access Project, and Women Win/Win-Win Strategies in close collaboration with founding corporate partners and investors Gap Foundation, PVH Foundation, H&M Foundation, The VF Foundation, and the Ralph Lauren Corporate Foundation.

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