



The TIAW World of Difference Award recognizes extraordinary individuals whose efforts have advanced economic empowerment for women locally, regionally or worldwide. The narratives below reflect these specific efforts. The 2020 World of Difference Award recipients are listed alphabetically by name, country and Award category.

Melek El Nimer
Lebanon
Community

Melek El Nimer focuses on empowering women leaders and founded the International Women's Forum (IWF) chapter in Beirut. IWF is one of the largest global women's organizations. In 2015, Melek received an IWF award for her work empowering women to change and become agents of change. Never one to shy away from helping people, Melek mobilized her extensive network after the August 2020 Beirut blast to assist the many displaced people especially women, youth and elderly. Melek is the founder of two Non-Governmental organizations in Lebanon addressing the needs of the underprivileged children, youth, women and the elderly living in Lebanon. Social Support Society, was established in 2006 with a mission to serve the needs of the elderly; the forgotten population especially women. The elderly are Palestinian refugees who live in the camps without hopes and dreams. The Social Support Society makes a positive difference in their lives through social, recreational and educational activities. The Social Support Society, and with collaboration from partners, also works with 2,000 Syrian refugees offering them schooling services in the area of Bekaa. In 2010, Melek founded ULYP – Unite Lebanon Youth Project after observing marginalized children, youth and women needing to be equipped with skills, knowledge and tools to integrate, succeed and understand that through education, they can change and make changes. Through her efforts a campus was built and equipped with the necessary facilities to provide overall education. To-date, ULYP has served over 10,000 beneficiaries. In 2016, ULYP was awarded the "Khalil Gibran Spirit of Humanity" award for Institutional Excellence from the Arab American Institute Foundation in Washington DC. Melek makes a difference to economically empower women by addressing the current and future needs of the marginalized, by being a role model and leader leveraging her vast global network to make impactful change.

Aparna Nagesh
India
Community

Aparna Nagesh is a dance-on-film artiste, a dancer and choreographer, actor, entrepreneur, and activist. She is the founder of High Kicks, the first all-woman dance ensemble in Chennai, and Madras Dance Arts. One example of her influence, Aparna spoke at the 2016 Vital Voices Mentoring Walk held at Chennai, where through speech she inspired others about the ability and need to use art to make a difference and use the arts particularly dance to spearhead change and take action particularly young women. Aparna, as an actor performed with Kirithi Jayakumar-playwright and actor - in "Frankly Speaking" which essentially starts where The Diary of Anne Frank ends. The play channels the voices of eight young women from conflict zones in different

parts of the world, and is interspersed with passages from The Diary of Anne Frank. Aparna's performance tells the stories of a woman from Srebrenica after the massacre, a woman from Sri Lanka after the horrific civil war, and a Yazidi woman from Kurdistan after the advent of the ISIS left audiences moved. Aparna uses dance to reach out to communities in need of support: especially young women, but also marginalized children, aged seniors with Parkinson's, survivors of gender-based violence, and communities that have faced historical oppression and continue to struggle because of discriminatory policies. By training and coaching in dance and choreography, Aparna has ignited the careers of several young women and enabling them to become financially independent. Aparna has received several awards for her art in dance and choreography, feminist video, and speeches that influence women and others to change especially gender equity and gender-based violence.

Liz Reinert
United States
Community

Liz Reinert became the executive director of Suited for Change in August 2019. Ms. Reinert joined Suited for Change after eight years of service to DC Central Kitchen, a DC-based nonprofit and social enterprise where she served as the director of workforce development. With over a decade of experience in nonprofit management, Ms. Reinert has significant knowledge working with diverse communities and has become a leader in fostering strategic partnerships that empower clients served by Suited for Change. This organization is Washington, DC's leading nonprofit for women in transitional circumstances in need of professional attire and job readiness support as they enter and re-enter the workforce. Ms. Reinert has long been dedicated to the Washington, DC community, creating pathways to employment, adult education, and financial independence to residents interested in the restaurant and hospitality industry. She has also achieved quantifiable success in all aspects of fundraising and program management. Ms. Reinert holds a Bachelor of Arts in political science comparative government from UCLA and a Masters of Public Administration in nonprofit management from George Mason University.

Rasha Al Agouz
Saudi Arabia
Corporate

Rasha Al Agouz dreamt of making a difference in the world. In 2007, Rasha co-founder of LadyLingua Ltd (LadyLingua.org), a company that helps both entrepreneurs and women. It is an online translation company that hires remote female translators and working moms to help them gain income while taking care of their families. She became a chartered linguist and a member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists and 3 years later, became a fellow member. She continues to adjust and adapt as technology allows more positive changes and opportunities.

She's also author of Standing Tall Without Heels, a book that highlights the achievements of female business owners in the Middle East and North Africa. Rasha conducted personal interviews and compiled the experiences of women from various fields, including finance, science, culinary arts, design, translation, etc. She brings the challenges and triumphs of these women into a collection complete with advice, quotes, and self-reflection opportunities. This book is the culmination of over 20 years spent working toward Rasha's vision of inspiring positive change by guiding women and youth to pursue their dreams and finding their "why".

Michele Piercey

France
Corporate

The most effective programming paths to Countering Violent Extremism try to help people to find licit, peaceful alternatives to extremism, and other paths to belonging — whether that's finding ways to resolve land issues or brokering connections between people and their government; or re-building economies. In particular, many of Michele's activities in her years of work in post conflict environments have focused on the economic empowerment of women where relatively small amounts of aid to develop female focused industry/employment opportunities have long-term sustainable benefits to communities and the post-conflict environment. The majority of her work has taken place in some of the most challenging environments for women including Iraq, Afghanistan, and Tunisia - where she was largely on the ground leading collaborative teams of both international and local staff (many women). As leader of Chemonics Peace, Stability, and Transition practice she led the industry outreach on conflict and fragility, and conducted assessments, mentored field staff, and facilitated program strategy reviews in Libya, Jordan, Kenya, Mali, Burkina Faso, Thailand and Philippines. Michele has directly and indirectly facilitated the economic empowerment of countless women in post conflict societies - where research shows that lasting outcomes are more readily achieved when women are financially and physically able to participate in rebuilding civil society.

Neelofar Ali
United States
Education

Neelofar Ali supervised and implemented Early Childhood Development programs in diverse socio-cultural settings in Pakistan. She has hands on experience in planning academic activities for teachers and students, designing academic courses for teachers, content development, working with all stakeholders, setting High Scope and Montessori classroom environment, planning and organizing events. She conducted many awareness sessions and workshops for communities on importance of ECD, inclusive education, and child rights. She also trained ECD teachers from Pakistan, America, Afghanistan and Tajikistan and helped establish ECD centers in these countries. She trained domestic women in early childhood development, child protection and on women's empowerment. She trained thousands of teachers and care givers on Early Childhood Education. A huge number of women established their own centers and now they are financially independent and became entrepreneurs. She successfully established 34 ECD centers in a very rural area Sindh Pakistan. Neelofar Ali's aim towards her goal was crystal clear which made her establish centers in different rural areas of Sindh and Gilgit Baltistan. Neelofar Ali knows the world of early childhood development which helped other educators to benefit from her methodologies, classroom management and learning styles, resulting in economic empowerment for women and their families.

Aurélie Jean
United States
Education

Aurélie Jean is the CEO and co-founder of In Silico Veritas, a development agency in computer modeling and analytics. Aurélie has collaborated with the Ministry of National Education of France on STEM education, particularly for girls. Through her writing on sciences and technologies for Le Point and Elle International, she has become well-known to the public and a sought-after inspirational speaker. Through her digital activism, exemplified by her Twitter activity

(over 20k followers), Aurélie has become a role model and inspiration for young women in computer science and artificial intelligence.

Jill Klein
United States
Education

Jill Klein has spent many years advocating for women's empowerment and has always been motivated to help others succeed. Klein is the interim dean of American University's School of Professional & Extended Studies. In 2019, Klein was recognized by Women in Technology, a professional organization for women in the Washington, DC technology community for her work at AU and for leadership in academia. Since 2001, she worked to involve students with WIT and several have taken leadership roles. Klein got involved with WIT in the 2000s, creating a program called The First Five Years, which the organization integrated into its training for female MBAs. In 2010, Klein and WIT sought to ascertain how many women sit on corporate boards locally. The results were dismal, even with the majority of college degrees earned by women; they held only 10 percent of the corporate board positions. They created the Leadership Foundry which provides a nine-month program to help women prepare for board service. It produces an annual report on women's corporate boardroom advancement, and Klein has enlisted numerous AU students on the project. Those students present the research findings every November, giving them the opportunity for networking, jobs and visibility with high powered women. Because of Klein's and WIT's efforts and influence, the percentage of female board members climbed to 17 percent. She indicated that when young women get engaged in technology companies, the companies are more successful. Klein worked with Twomentor to accelerate career services programming at AUs fully online MBA & MS Analytics degree programs. Jill has been a leader on the Cornell University President's Council of Cornell Women. She tirelessly works to empower the next generation of women achieving significant and meaningful results to economically empower women.

Debby Rooney
United States
Education

After visiting Kenya in 1991, Debby Rooney started BEADS for Education to improve the status of women in Kenya through women's business development and girls' education. Debby has significantly portrayed the qualities of a hero, for fighting against cultural practices in the Maasai community to rescue girls from forced early marriage and circumcision. About 52.2 million girls in Sub-Saharan Africa are excluded from school due to poverty and cultural practices like circumcision and early forced marriages. Debby has been able to reduce these numbers for 25 years by supporting girl's education from primary to secondary school through university. Over 500 girls have been supported through her program, approximately 100 girls have graduated from the university and now have good jobs, married and supporting their families. Eight years ago, Debby opened a secondary school to offer quality education. The school has sponsored 120 girls. The rescued girls are able to get an education at a conducive, safe place and later attend university and college. There are about 35 alumni pursuing advanced courses. The projects take place in 3 regions within Kenya. In each region, BEADS provides school sponsorships, business development opportunities, and programs to improve the quality of education, women's rights and economic empowerment.

Mam-Yassin Sarr-Fox

**United States
Education**

Ms. Sarr-Fox came to the United States after high school to further her education. Her goal was to prepare for a life work of uplifting the girls and woman in her home country of the Gambia. Returning home during the summers she began by holding training seminars. By 2010, she had completed degrees and certifications in education. She returned home and with a network of supporters, has since raised a school, assisted hundreds of girls and women to complete high school. Starfish Academy accepts 100 girls a year so that Ms. Sarr-Fox has been assisting 200 girls a year for the last 20 years. With so many young women now volunteering to assist those coming behind them, her work now is to establish a junior college where the young women and some boys and young men can gain skills to develop, or improve on, entrepreneurial skills. The groundwork for those skills are being developed along with acquisition of academic skills as students have been serving by providing first aid, village clean up, and early childhood service and parental training for village families. After the age of 16, education must be pursued at high school requiring paid tuition. In general, young women have only one clear option and that is marriage. While admirable, it is the only clear option. No path is open for women to pursue other contributions to society, Starfish International has begun the task of opening doors to skills acquisitions, which in turn has opened the path to better service to advance the society as a whole. The women will not only advance themselves economically, but they will advance their families and the community. An educated woman improves the world.

**Sheheen Shariff
Canada
Education**

Shaheen Shariff is a professor at McGill University's Department of Integrated Studies in Education, where her work is centered on the intersection of education, law, and policy, with a focus on constitutional, human rights and civil law as it impacts educational institutions. Her research over seventeen years has examined court cases involving students with disabilities; gifted students; Charter of Rights and Human Rights challenges based on freedom of religion, diversity and pluralism; freedom of expression, and negligence in schools. She is best known for her work on cyberbullying, and sexual violence as symptoms of deeply ingrained systemic discrimination and societal power imbalances. Shaheen continues to work internationally and nationally with schools, universities, government policy makers and justice systems to counter and address systemic discrimination and violence through critical legal, feminist and media literacy. She has received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for contributions to Canada, and the Facebook Award on Digital Citizenship. Most recently Shaheen is the lead on the Social Sciences and Humanities Research of Canada – iMPACTS – Partnership Grant, which is a multi-sector partnership to investigate and develop policy and practice models to dismantle rape culture in universities a total project investment of \$5.7 million. Her research, grants, expertise and advocacy is changing the world and thus empowering women and girls because they are able to thrive in safe, humane, and equal space as policies, procedures and laws are enacted on campuses, in the work place, domestically and internationally.

**Jennifer Classen
South Africa
Entrepreneurship**

Jennifer Classen is the founder and owner of Ngaphaya Y2K10 a South African 100% Black Women-Owned business with 11 employees. Her company is a sourcing and procurement

company focusing on specialized, customized and technically complex products. Classen has committed herself to leading a life of purpose, which she defines as a proactive and productive focus on building long-term relationships with her customers, stakeholders and staff alike. To that end, she received WEConnect International Certification which has helped her to develop the business further and strategically. As a true entrepreneur, Classen saw the plight within the SMME sector regarding access to finance and turned it into an opportunity; in 2014, she started a second company which offers finance to women-owned SMMEs in South Africa. This financing model empowers women-led SMMEs to grow their businesses through access to finance at favorable terms. Classen has been recognized in the form of numerous awards. She is proud to be and is respected as a mentor to multiple entrepreneurs and regards mentoring as part of her daily entrepreneurship journey. She is a Vital Voices Fellow. Always planning beyond the immediate situation, Jennifer "walks the talk" deserving of the world of difference award as a role model and mentor to women entrepreneurs and supporting women with financing options so that they can grow their businesses.

Holly Galbraith
Australia
Entrepreneurship

Holly Galbraith and co-founder Emma Castle established "Women in Tourism" in 2015 to help empower women in tourism through events and a Facebook community. A not for profit labor of love for no financial gain, the organization has grown into a movement in Australia that is looking to expand internationally. While the travel and tourism sector is disproportionately dominated by women, women are not often featured in roles of influence and as industry speakers. Through Holly and Emma's efforts, they have profiled women of note as role models for the industry, tackled the difficult discussions and created a safe environment for open conversations about gender-related issues and a broad range of other questions worth debating. From Women's Day events, through to sessions on 'Path to Leadership', 'Leadership Lunch with Confidence', 'Men's roles in women's careers', '#EachforEqual' and the eternal question of balancing motherhood with work, the ups and downs and realities of life with children', no topic has been too thorny for Holly and her guest speakers. Just prior to lockdown, Women in Tourism launched their strategy to 2023 and beyond for the organization, which can be accessed here: <http://www.womenintourismevents.com/women-in-tourism-strategy-2023-and-beyond/> Holly and Emma have grown the community to over 2,300 members in five years and continue to support tourism businesses through Covid-recovery. Holly continues to help women make an economic impact through providing them a safe environment to grow their career and expand their confidence in an industry that while heavily female dominated, previously lacked a strong voice representing female leadership.

Melanie Gleeson
Australia
Entrepreneurship

Endota is the largest day spa network in Australia with over 100 spas across the country. 100% founded by women and with an over 95% female team - many of those working flexible hours to achieve their dual goals of career and family. The majority of the spas are franchises - owned by women in their local communities, employing mostly women in all roles. The ethos of the Endota Group is to live consciously and give back wherever possible. Besides providing women with opportunities to follow pathway from training (by way of our Wellness College) through to employment in, and/or ownership of one or more of the spas - Endota is financially empowering an inspiring group of indigenous women located in Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia, whose

artwork appears on product packaging and who receive a percentage of sales in return. Over the years, many thousands of Australian women have found their way to a better financial future in a uniquely female focused business.

Dr. Trisheetaa Tej
India
Entrepreneurship

Dr. Trisheetaa Tej is a recognized multitalented global trendsetter. She is a writer by profession, entrepreneur by choice, clinical nutritionist by heart, caring and benevolent worker for the physically handicapped and a trusted friend for women. Her dream project, Pencil9 is a first of its kind digital communications team with operations in Hyderabad, India. It aims to bring work from home opportunities to women across the world. Her relentless service in helping women build a financially independent life has made her a well-known figure around the world. She has brought several laurels, awards, recognition and honour to Telangana State and India. In addition to being a Business Management graduate, she is also a Certified Clinical Nutrition Specialist from Apollo Hospitals. She received a Doctorate in 2016. Eventually, she met several women who had sacrificed their career and wishes to fulfil the responsibilities and demands of family. She, then, decided to carve an opportunity for women to get back to the workforce without having to disturb their personal life. She founded Pencil9 with 2 women to work from home as a content writer. Today, with over 3700 women spread globally, Pencil9 is a path breaker in letting every woman lead a financially independent life as a content writer, web designer, developer, editor, graphic designer, digital marketer, social media expert, community page manager, SEO - SEM expert, travel advisor, medical and fitness writer, PR manager, translator, transcriptionist, photography, videographer and more. Not every woman she empowered knew the job, she and her team trained them to be an expert by sharpening and enhancing their skills.

Ingun Bol de Bok
Netherlands
Non-Profit/NGO

Ingun Bol de Bok, Founder of Female Wave of Change, strongly believes that we need the feminine energy and feminine values to make this world a better place. We want to connect women worldwide and support them to step into their femininity and make their voice heard. In January 2017, Female Wave of Change (FWoC) was launched. We live in a rapidly changing world and Ingun believes that we really need that feminine energy, those feminine values to change the world for the better. We need change to be disruptive now to come closer to who we really are, to our purpose. We need women to take responsibility to create their own future, the future of their families, their communities and the world. FWoC offers women a platform to connect globally, to share knowledge and experience, to embrace change and create opportunities together. FWoC has accomplished and achieved many successes: built a large network with representation in 35 countries/states worldwide, on all 6 continents, 37 Global Ambassadors, Ambassadors First Among Equals and Country Ambassadors. Monthly events global online and local to reach as many women as possible have begun. The first online education program "Women Leading in Change: a FWoC Transformation Journey" developed and operational since January 2019; 3 groups of 46 participants have graduated thus far. The FWoC Business model is designed so that local organizations can expand their sustainable income streams with the education program, online global events, and their share in the local income streams. FWoC developed a Strategic Plan for 2020-2021, building on and expanding on the foundation of purpose, vision, mission and core values to "Reshape the Future" with education of

women of major importance to stimulate the economic and social empowerment and to prepare women to lead.

Gabriela Fiorini
Peru
Non-Profit/NGO

Gabriela Fiorini serves as the President of the Board of Directors of the six restaurants Punta Sal, which are specialized in innovative Peruvian seafood cuisine. Punta Sal recently celebrated its 25th anniversary as one of the most important and renowned restaurants in Peru. In addition to the business, Mrs. Fiorini is a member of the Executive Committee and Director of the Lima Chamber of Commerce as well as President of its Committee of Tourism. She is also one of the members of The Executive Committee of the Lima Chamber of Commerce Commission of Social Responsibility and of the Commission of Women's Development. Gabriela serves as Vice President of the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Tourism - AFEET PERU. Ever willing to advance and support women entrepreneurs, Gabriela is a Member of the Steering Committee and Governance Committee of International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge – IWEC She is responsible for the South American network of IWEC's women business owners. She also serves on the IWEC Foundation – board of directors, advisory council, and as a Global Ambassador. She is a member of the Lima Chapter of Women Presidents Association – WPO. WPO is a nonprofit member organization of women presidents, CEOs and managing directors of privately held, multimillion-dollar companies. Gabriela has made a world of difference in advancing and supporting women's economic empowerment locally and internationally, particularly in South America especially for potential and existing entrepreneurs.

Rachel Ho
Malaysia
Non-Profit/NGO

Rachel is a single mother who, following a divorce, raised two boys. Today her sons - one is a doctor and the other an advertising director. Rachel is the chairperson for a single mothers support group called Single Mothers for Single Mothers. She is the Chairperson for an organization - Iringan Kasih - a shelter for young teenage pregnant girls and a home for unwanted babies. Rachel runs a center that provides single mothers with vocational training and skills training. To-date approximately 150 women have an income due to Rachel's business program. In addition, due to Rachel's program mothers have hope for the future with the ability and potential to set up their own businesses and have the financial stability and independence to support and raise their children.

Kirthi Jayakumar
India
Non-Profit/NGO

Kirthi Jayakumar is an Indian women's rights activist, a social entrepreneur, a peace activist, artist, lawyer, and writer. She is a Commonwealth Scholar, a Vital Voices (VV) Lead Fellow, a VV Engage Fellow, a Local Pathways Fellow, and a World Pulse Impact Leader. Kirthi is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts. She founded The Red Elephant Foundation, an initiative built on storytelling, civilian peace-building and activism for gender equality. She also founded The Gender Security Project, an initiative aimed at expanding the global understanding of gender policy, legal, and institutional levels. As an artist, working with pen and ink to curate "Zen

doodles.” She uses doodling as a means to express her activism for gender equality and peace education. She runs an Instagram based project called Femcyclopaedia where she doodles portraits of inspiring women through the ages and from across the world and curates their stories under these portraits. She is a writer, often capturing the human spirit in words. Kirthi wrote a play, Frankly Speaking, which, essentially starts where The Diary of Anne Frank ends. The play channels the voices of eight young women from various conflict zones in different parts of the world.

Kirthi is a multi-talented woman and role model, who tirelessly and generously uses her talents to provide influence, hope and support for women, particularly young women, to achieve gender equity and financial empowerment.

Crystal Little
United States
Non-Profit/NGO

Crystal Little is committed to empowering women through work in the development of a non-profit organization. Crystal has designed and implemented a program in the 3rd worst county in the United States for systemic poverty in Forsythe County, NC. Flourish is a high-impact poverty reduction model aimed to support women and their families who are on their journey out of poverty. This initiative is designed to bring together committed individuals (companions) and Flourish participants (achievers – mostly single mothers from systemic poverty) in a myriad of ways to work on goal setting, skill development, and relationship building to facilitate whole-person wellness necessary for families to transition out of poverty. All participants gather weekly to share a meal and engage in a wide range of programming, which is provided by the Community Support Network. Companions and Achievers learn alongside each other and bridge the gap of racial, economic, and social differences. Crystal came from systemic poverty herself so she understands it at a very deep level. She has earned her way out of poverty and has recently achieved a PhD from Wake Forest University. Her goal is to create a module system that can be taught in other communities around the country. The effectiveness of this program is evident by the women who have achieved financial security and independence, as well as, those that are on the journey out of poverty.

Regina Llopis Rivas
Spain
Non-Profit/NGO

Regina Llopis Rivas is the Founder, Chairman & CEO in AIA consulting. Beginning in 2018, Regina of Spain is the President and cofounder of Women Angels for STEAM (WA4STEAM), which is a nonprofit association, is a growing international community of women angel investors seeking to expand women entrepreneurial presence in the Science, Technology, Engineering Arts & Architecture and Mathematics (STEAM) fields. WA4STEAM held its first forum in Spain with 60 women investors from 6 different countries in attendance. Since 2019, she has been the Vice President, Spanish Business Angels Networks Association (AEBAN) in Madrid. In 2020, Regina became a Board Member of the European Business Angels Network (EBAN) in Brussels. Regina has devoted much of her life to women entrepreneurs in STEAM and entrepreneurship. She has been a Global Ambassador and Board Director, IWEC since 2017. She has received several prestigious awards for her efforts in leadership, technology, and entrepreneurship. Regina has consistently demonstrated her support for women for over 30 years especially in STEAM.

Luciana Malamud
Argentina
Non-Profit/NGO

Luciana Malamud began her professional career in journalism, believing in its power as a tool for social transformation. After working in the field for some time, she wished to participate in social impact even more directly. Hence, alongside journalism, Malamud began her journey in the nonprofit sector by creating a cultural organization alongside other members. They worked with disadvantaged families during the financial crisis of 2001 that came and often stayed at the train station for long periods of time – offering meals, stories, entertainment, and weekend outings. In 2005, Malamud was given a scholarship for an intensive workshop for women’s rights and empowerment with the Centre for Development and Population Activities in North America. Since then, she has been invited back as an instructor and continues to coach women heading social organizations involving themes of gender in Latin America. She is also a member of Red MUA (Women in Action), an organization that supports immigrant women leadership. Today, Malamud focuses on serving as president of Asociacion SAHDES today, a civil organization working to empower women in health, rights, and economic sustainability. The organization is currently running several programs: “MAMI”, “Crianza en Red”, and “Potenciamos.” “MAMI” increases solidarity and friendship among women in communities by training able women as companions to support young and vulnerable pregnant women and new mothers through health and career advice. “Crianza en Red” organizes workshops seeking to reduce gender violence and child abuse through education for families. Finally, “Potenciamos” economically empowers women towards self-sufficiency. During the pandemic, “Potenciamos” has been holding virtual knitting workshops, allowing women to keep creating clothes and generating income. Malamud is committed to her work in fighting for the empowerment of women and gender equality in Argentina and globally.

Justina Montalico
Peru
Non-Profit/NGO

The Aymara Women Coordinator (CMA) brings together more than three hundred artisans-women, poor region of Peru, divided into twenty two different groups from four provinces in Puno’s region. The Aymara Women Coordinator (CMA) is an institution focused on quality hand-knitted clothing and accessories made with cotton, baby alpaca and alpaca wool for men, women and children. All CMA products are hand-knitted garments are made on, among others, knitting needles, crochet and embroidery techniques. The CMA is currently involved in a small development project supported by the Technical University of Madrid (UPM) and the Spanish NGO Design for Development (DPD). Both conduct annual workshops in which Spanish designers provide training to each group of the best artisans during 30 days of intensive coursework in Peru. They have begun to export their products to different countries such as: Germany, United States, Canada, Spain, Australia, Sweden, etc. Justina Montalico has taken a lead role in consolidating the organization and improving efficiencies. She has worked to professionalize and document their processes and supports the women with training, development, and follow-up. Also the case study of the CMA is being followed by different universities in the world as a model to carry out development projects, having given rise to doctoral thesis and research articles. The income obtained by the artisans of the CMA has helped to improve their income, providing or improving food and shelter security for their families. Additionally, with this income the children can attend schools and some attend university instead of also working full time to support the family. Justina’s efforts have helped the CMA to achieve a higher level of professionalism and business capabilities, resulting in empowering women of the CMA.

Nancy Ploeger
United States
Non-Profit/NGO

Nancy Ploeger is one of IWECE's co-founders (2007) and was the President of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce (MCC) for 21 years. She left MCC in 2016 to build the IWECE Foundation, a 501c(3) international women's business organization. IWECE supports women-owned businesses by providing market intelligence, education, connection and visibility. Partners are chambers of commerce and women's business organizations from around the globe as well as several sponsors such as Microsoft, CaixaBank, IBM and Wells Fargo. Nancy led the Chamber to develop robust economic development initiatives that enabled it, and its 10,000 member base, to create a network of reciprocal collaboration, trade, empowerment and partnerships with organizations, associations and businesses in Latin America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. She also created various industry committees for the chamber including technology, Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBE), entrepreneurial and international committees. She held seats on several boards during her MCC tenure including Mayor Bloomberg's MWBE Advisory Council for NYC and the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation for many years. She continues to hold a seat on the NY District Export Council as appointed by the US Department of Commerce. She was also the president of the NY State Chamber of Commerce Association for 2 years. The US Chamber of Commerce Foundation also presented her with the prestigious Annual Chamber Award for her work in NYC post 9/11 and included her in disaster recovery programs throughout the country including New Orleans / Hurricane Katrina. Nancy works tirelessly to promote, support, educate and economically empower women.

Susan Coles
Australia
Public Service/Government

In her role as Australia's High Commissioner & Ambassador to the Indian Ocean islands (Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles and the Comores) Susan Coles was a major influencer in the development of the women's Coaching and Mentoring program, "Business without Borders". Susan effectively enabled the implementation of the program by supporting two entrepreneurs each representing two countries on either side of the world, Australia and Mauritius, to apply and ultimately be successful in being awarded a grant from the Australian government. The Mentoring program was devised to assist entrepreneurs in growing their businesses by empowering them by building their business acumen and capabilities. This program has been so successful that has been supported through five years of operations and three tranches of grants. In fact, Susan was so convinced of the effectiveness of the program that she accompanied the founders of the program on visits to all regions of the Indian Ocean Islands, her presence giving an enormous encouragement and demonstrably showing how important the program was to its women. She met with Presidents and senior government officials often persuading them to visit the workshops and official launches; and facilitated Australia's then Ambassador for Women and Girls, Natasha Stott-Despoja, to connect with the program on her visit to the region.

Other projects Susan championed in her time as High Commissioner included the Women in Uniform networks set up by a seconded Australian police officer, empowering Mauritian and Seychelles women in police, fire, prison and nursing services; and training for all Mauritius magistrates in combatting gender-based violence through the court system, led by visiting experts from Australia.

Nicholas Haines
United Kingdom
Champion of Women's Economic Empowerment

Nicholas Haines is the co-creator of the #NoMoreBoxes Movement & Methodology. He co-created the movement after speaking at the Global Summit, Impact Leadership 21 special 'Conversations with Men' panel which was held at the United Nations HQ in NYC March 2018. He has been globally raising awareness towards unconscious gender biases, gender inequality and gender pay-gap by looking at what sits at the heart of all inequality - i.e. the habit to put people into boxes that limit them to be who they were born to be, not conditioned to be because of their gender, race, sexuality or whatever the box is. With his work, he is bringing a whole new light and energy into the gender equality conversation and as a man doing so, it makes it even more valuable for humanity. Their initial goal to reach over 5 million people with this message was achieved within the first 9 months of the movement. The #NoMoreBoxes Mission is to reach 500.000.000 by the end of 2030 unleashing women and men from what they are conditioned to be, giving them space to be more who they were born to be by using their skills, experience, a background to make a sustainable impact in their world. The #NoMoreBoxes Mission will influence and improve the inequities of gender biases, gender inequality, and gender pay-gap, thus resulting in economically empowering women.

Sunit Mehra
India
Champion for Women's Economic Empowerment

Sunit is a serial entrepreneur and a champion for women's empowerment in India. His work over the last three decades has been at the confluence of Leadership and Sustainable Development. Inspired by his grand-father, Sunit strongly believes that investing in girls' education is the most effective way of empowering women economically. Having successfully run India's finest Leadership and Board Advisory firm, Hunt Partners, Sunit realized that women were neither adequately represented in management nor on Boards. He saw the need for an organization that would focus on both these agendas. Economically liberating women from humble financial backgrounds, through the pursuit of professional education, on the one hand, and preparing these young women for leadership roles, on the other hand. Thereby creating a wider talent pool for India Inc. and helping bridge the gender divide. Katalyst achieves this objective through a blend of unique development interventions, including a scientifically researched 600 hour proprietary curriculum, one-on-one mentorship, world class industry exposure and access to best in class technology. Set up in 2007 with 10 young women, Katalyst now has chapters in Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore and Delhi in India. Katalyst has directly impacted the lives of over 1,200 girls through the program. Katalyst alumni occupy senior positions in numerous prestigious corporations and the government. Research indicates that Katalyst students multiply their annual family income 5 times on the average, upon graduation, thereby changing the life trajectories of their respective families. The average salary of a Katalyst student is in excess of USD 10,000 PA, nearly twice the average of their peer group. Katalyst is a professionally run organization with an all women team. Each year, donations/grants from numerous corporate and individual donors are received, including Goldman Sachs, Siemens, JP Morgan, Schindler, Accenture and HSBC.