



**For immediate release
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Leading Global Gender Equality Organizations Launch Ambitious Collective Effort to Increase Economic Power of Women and Girls in India

Oakland, CA: Some of the world's most effective and engaged gender equality organizations will harness their individual expertise into an innovative collective impact project that aims to increase the economic power of women and girls in India. The three year project, "Collective Impact Partners: Women's and Girl's Economic Empowerment Advocacy in India," will be led by the Global Fund for Women, Global Women's Leadership Network, Public Health Institute, Rise Up and World Pulse.

The Collective Impact Partners (CIP) will strengthen the capacity of civil society leaders and organizations to advocate for economic justice and empowerment for women and girls in India, by developing a collective impact model that includes a digital framework for delivering and scaling integrated services. Their efforts will be supported by a \$2.1 million grant from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. In India traditional economic structures have often excluded women: only 29% of women in India participate in the workplace, only 26% have access to formal credit, and women comprise only 29% of the nation's total Internet users.

"This partnership recognizes that current economic systems, policies and practices often exclude and discriminate against women and girls. Together, we aim to support local leaders in advocating for changes in those systems in order to advance women's rights, solutions and opportunities," explains Mary Pittman, President of the Public Health Institute.

In collaboration with a cohort of 20 India-based leaders and eight organizations, the collective will launch an advocacy and leadership development program that will enable girls and women leaders to (1) advance public policies to advance economic justice and empowerment for women and girls ; (2) improve implementation of existing legislation; (3) increase resource allocation to support economic empowerment programs; and, (4) utilize the national and/or state legal frameworks, as well as global agreements, to hold government leaders accountable.

"CIP's framework multiplies our collective strengths and contributions – by unifying our advocacy expertise, technological capacity, and collaboration with local NGOs, we will invest in Indian women and girl leaders to increase economic opportunities for all." says Denise Dunning, Founder and Executive Director of Rise Up.

CIP will also devise a safe, curated online space for Indian women and girls to connect that will (1) facilitate positive connection and collaboration; (2) ignite agency and action through storytelling and

encouragement specific to economic empowerment and advocacy; (3) raise awareness to allies and influencers around economic justice and empowerment, campaigns, and policies; and, (4) crowdsource curated resources that further enable Indian women and girls to engage in effective advocacy.

"The number of mobile phone and internet users is rapidly multiplying and the Indian government is focused on connecting the entire country through its Digital India campaign. There is a great readiness among women to gain more information, ideas, and resources without fear and to find what has eluded them until now: economic power and the freedom to decide for themselves," said Stella Paul, World Pulse digital empowerment trainer and journalist in India. "Collective Impact Partners is launching at a time when there has never been greater potential to strengthen rising women's leadership and access to economic opportunity across my country."

As a group, the CIP members have ties to more than 1,000 partner organizations across India, on-going relationships with more than 3,000 individual leaders and more than 100 years advocating for gender equality. "Together, we can implement achievable, scalable and sustainable solutions that advance economic justice and propel lasting social transformation," says Musimbi Kanyoro, President and CEO of the Global Fund for Women.

For more information, contact Ann Whidden, Public Health Institute director of communications, at awhidden@phi.org or [415-425-5157](tel:415-425-5157).

About the Collective Impact Partners

Global Fund for Women is one of the world's leading foundations for gender equality, standing up for the human rights of women and girls. It campaigns for zero violence, economic and political empowerment, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Global Women's Leadership Network (GWLN) envisions a world where all women and girls can achieve gender equity--politically, socially, and economically. Through its premier transformational leadership program, Women Leaders for the World (WLW), GWLN is empowering exceptional women all over the world--from over 40 countries and counting--with the leadership skills and the engaged global network they need in order to make lasting change in their respective communities.

The Public Health Institute, an independent nonprofit organization, is dedicated to promoting health, well-being and quality of life for people throughout California, across the nation and around the world. PHI improves health and equity by discovering new research, strengthening key partnerships and programs, and advancing sound health policies.

Rise Up activates women and girls to transform their lives, families and communities through investment in local solutions, strengthening leadership, and building movements. Since 2009, Rise Up's powerful network of over 500 leaders has directly benefited 7 million girls, youth, and women and advocated for over 100 laws and policies impacting 115 million people in Africa, Latin America, South Asia, and the US. Rise Up is based at the Public Health Institute (PHI).

[World Pulse](#) is a social network that connects women worldwide to speed up global change. Today tens of thousands of women from 190 countries are using World Pulse's safe, supportive online community to gain digital leadership skills, exchange stories and resources, and have grown their impact to collectively improve the lives of more than 6.3 million people in their communities.