

# issue brief

## Empowering Women Worldwide



This CAFAmerica Issue Brief presents a synopsis of facts, research and funding opportunities for causes you care about. It isn't meant to be a comprehensive report, and for that reason, provides a list of resources and website where you can learn more.

We hope you will use this as a starting point to investigate your funding interests, and find out how you can make a global difference.

### CAFAmerica

King Street Station  
1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 150  
Alexandria, VA 22314-2840

Tel: 1 703 549 8931

Fax: 1 703 549 8934

Email: [info@cafamerica.org](mailto:info@cafamerica.org)

Web: [www.cafamerica.org](http://www.cafamerica.org)

EIN: 43-1634280

### BACKGROUND

In spite of how far women rights have advanced in the last decade, there is still a long way to go globally. The statistics speak for themselves: women make up 70% of all people living in extreme poverty. Women produce more than 50% of all the food in the world yet own only 1% of all agricultural land. What's more, gender violence causes more death and disability among women age 15–44 than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined.<sup>1</sup>

Despite many international agreements affirming their human rights, women are still much more likely than men to be poor, malnourished and illiterate. They usually have less access than men to medical care, property ownership, credit, training and employment. They are far less likely than men to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the world, women play crucial roles in driving economic development. Yet, their contributions are often underestimated and undervalued as a result of gender inequalities. According to the World Bank, in sub-Saharan Africa alone, gender inequality has suppressed annual per capita growth by nearly 1%.<sup>3</sup>

When women can claim their rights, life improves for them and everyone around them. When women can and do achieve gender equality, in dignity and in freedom from want or fear, they contribute to the health and productivity of not only their own family, but entire communities. In this issue brief, you'll learn about various groups working to empower women, and how you can help.

### SUCCESSSES

While the statistics are sobering, there have been some successes for women across the globe. Some examples:

- Every year of mothers' education corresponds to 5 to 10 percent lower mortality rates in children under the age of five.<sup>4</sup>
- As larger numbers of women enter politics, public agendas change, corruption is reduced and governance improves.<sup>5</sup>
- Investments in the health and education of women not only benefit them, but also their families.<sup>6</sup>
- A mother's rise in income has a greater positive effect on her family than a father's rise in income.<sup>7</sup>

Despite these advances, the role of private philanthropy, both in the U.S. and across the globe, has never been more important. Here are some groups working to increase awareness and raise funds for women's rights and social justice:

### Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)

AWID is an international membership organization connecting, informing and mobilizing people and organizations committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. It focuses on causing policy, institutional and individual change that will improve the lives of women and girls everywhere. One of the primary ways they do this is by facilitating ongoing debates on fundamental and provocative issues, as well as by building

1 Mama Cash, [www.mamacash.org](http://www.mamacash.org)

2 United Nations Population Fund, [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)

3 International Center for Research on Women, [www.icrw.org](http://www.icrw.org)

4 Mama Cash, [www.mamacash.org](http://www.mamacash.org)

5 *Ibid*

6 *Ibid*

7 *Ibid*

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individual and organizational capacities of those working for women's empowerment and social justice. To learn more, visit [www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org).

## **Global Fund for Women**

The Global Fund for Women makes grants to support women's rights groups based outside the United States working on a variety of human rights issues, including: an end to gender-based violence; economic and environmental justice; advancement of health and sexual/reproductive rights; expanded civic and political participation; increased access to education and social change philanthropy. To learn more, visit [www.globalfundforwomen.org](http://www.globalfundforwomen.org).

## **International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)**

ICRW's mission is to empower women, advance gender equality and fight poverty in the developing world. Since its founding in 1976, ICRW has worked with partner organizations and governments throughout the world to promote gender equitable development, reduce poverty, and change the lives of millions of women and girls and their communities. ICRW aims to economically empower women; prevent HIV and AIDS among women and girls; ensure women's reproductive health and rights; create better life options for adolescent girls; reduce malnutrition and hunger; and eliminate violence against women. For more information about ICRW's projects, visit [www.icrw.org](http://www.icrw.org).

## **INVESTING IN WOMEN WITH CAFAmerica**

It's been said that when you invest in women, you invest in an entire community. CAFAmerica believes this, and that's why we fund a number of organizations working for women's empowerment and social justice. Here are some examples of what these organizations are doing—and how you too can make a difference:

### **Shakti Foundation for Disadvantaged Women, Bangladesh**

The Shakti Foundation for Disadvantaged Women has been working with very poor and disadvantaged women since 1992. Rooted in the belief that poor women have the ability to change their status, the Shakti Foundation's main objective is to empower women socio-economically.

This goal is achieved through access to credit and saving facilities, thus enhancing women's abilities to manage, control and sustain their business as they grow. The Foundation also aims to integrate women in the decision making stratum of the organization itself.

Through international grants, the Shakti Foundation is able to run its Urban Credit Program, which offers financial services to disadvantaged women, and a Small Enterprise Development program. The Shakti Foundation's main programs also include a health initiative to provide health education and cheap and accessible health care to poor women.

In particular, CAFAmerica grants were used to develop women's entrepreneurship capabilities through business management training, business linkage programs and other activities, such as the development of staff capacity and business promotion. A \$25,000 CAFAmerica grant in 2005 provided business management training for over 4,000 women. By 2008, this number is expected to reach 15,000. Since 2000, The Shakti Foundation has received nearly \$80,000 in grants from CAFAmerica. For more information, visit [www.sfdw.org](http://www.sfdw.org).

### **Kadin Emegini Degerlendirme Vakfi, Turkey**

Kadin Emegini Degerlendirme Vakfi, or the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work, aids women living in poverty to be economically active and improve the quality of their lives and their communities. Established in 1986, FSWW works in southeastern Turkey, the earthquake prone region of Marmara, and poor areas of Istanbul.

Its mission is rooted in the belief that equal participation of women in all levels of societal decision making must begin at the local level. As a result, FSWW coordinates with local governments, grassroots women's groups, and NGOs. In addition, FSWW conducts study tours to learn from similar organizations, exchange meetings between other grassroots women's groups, and dialogue building meetings with other sectors. In 2002, FSWW



established the first microfinance institution in Turkey, MAYA, to grant loans to poor women.

A CAFAmerica grantee since 2000, FSWW has received over \$200,000 in corporate donor suggested grants. In 2005, CAFAmerica grants were used to train women on basic financial services, saving and investing, and to support local women cooperatives. As a result, nine new cooperatives were started. Additional grants through CAFAmerica allowed this organization to provide leadership and communication trainings for women; strengthen the capacity of women cooperatives; establish a savings group and create centers for women and children. For more information, visit [www.kedv.org.tr](http://www.kedv.org.tr).

*To give to the organizations listed here, or another international charity of your choice, contact CAFAmerica today at [info@cafamerica.org](mailto:info@cafamerica.org).*

## RESOURCES

### Reports and Publications

Duvvury, Nata; Kapur, Aanchal. *A Rights-Based Approach to Realizing the Economic and Social Rights of Poor and Marginalized Women*. 6. To download the report, go to [www.icrw.org/docs/2006\\_Rights-basedEconandSocial.pdf](http://www.icrw.org/docs/2006_Rights-basedEconandSocial.pdf).

Kerr, Joanna. *Where is the Money for Women's Rights? Financial Sustainability for Women's Movements Worldwide*. Association for Women's Rights in Development, 2007. To download the report, go to [www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org).

Malhotra, Anju; Schuler, Sidney Ruth. *Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development*. International Center for Research on Women, 2005. To find out more, go to [http://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce/catalog/product?item\\_id=3839257](http://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce/catalog/product?item_id=3839257)

*Toward Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*. International Center for Research on Women, 2005. To download the report, go to [www.icrw.org/docs/2005\\_info\\_genderequality.pdf](http://www.icrw.org/docs/2005_info_genderequality.pdf)

### Websites

Centre for Social Justice, [www.socialjustice.org](http://www.socialjustice.org)

Association for Women's Rights in Development, [www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org)

Global Fund for Women, [www.globalfundforwomen.org/cms/](http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/cms/)

Human Rights Watch, [www.hrw.org/women](http://www.hrw.org/women)

International Center for Research on Women, [www.icrw.org](http://www.icrw.org)

United Nations Development Fund for Women, [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

United Nations Population Fund, [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)



**CAF America...Your World. Your Move.**

CAF America connects US donors with charities worldwide, helping them make a difference for people and causes they care about. We work with individuals, families, corporations and foundations. We also enable foreign charities to fundraise easily in the US.

With a network of offices around the globe, we are experts in global giving and identifying local needs. CAF America is an independent member of the CAF International Network, which spans six continents and manages more than \$4 billion in charitable funds.

CAF America makes global giving effective and secure for everyone. We're changing the culture of global giving, by creating a world where international giving is not uncommon, but done every day.

Join us in our commitment to make lasting change. Call us today for a free brochure, *Your Passport to Global Giving*, or visit our new website at [www.cafamerica.org](http://www.cafamerica.org).