

SNAPSHOT

Gender Equity and Equality Action Fund: Advancing Women's Economic Security Globally



The Gender Equity and Equality Action (GEEA) Fund advances women's economic security by increasing women's and girls' access to resources, services, and leadership opportunities and addressing barriers that limit their full participation in the economy. Launched in 2021, the GEEA Fund has invested \$200 million in direct resources in its first two years. An additional \$100 million in attributed indirect Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 funding, which was managed across USAID and State Department operating units, further advances the objectives of the GEEA Fund and the U.S. Strategy on Global Women's Economic Security.

The Fund is managed by USAID and implemented by USAID and the Department of State. The GEEA Fund priorities are guided by a U.S. Government-wide Steering Committee whose membership includes the USAID Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, with the Executive Office of the President in an observer role.

The U.S. Government has a longstanding commitment to promoting gender equality as a moral and strategic imperative. The Biden-Harris Administration prioritized this issue through the development of the [U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality](#), which identified global women's economic security as one of 10 strategic priorities and resulted in the first-ever [U.S. Strategy on Global Women's Economic Security](#).

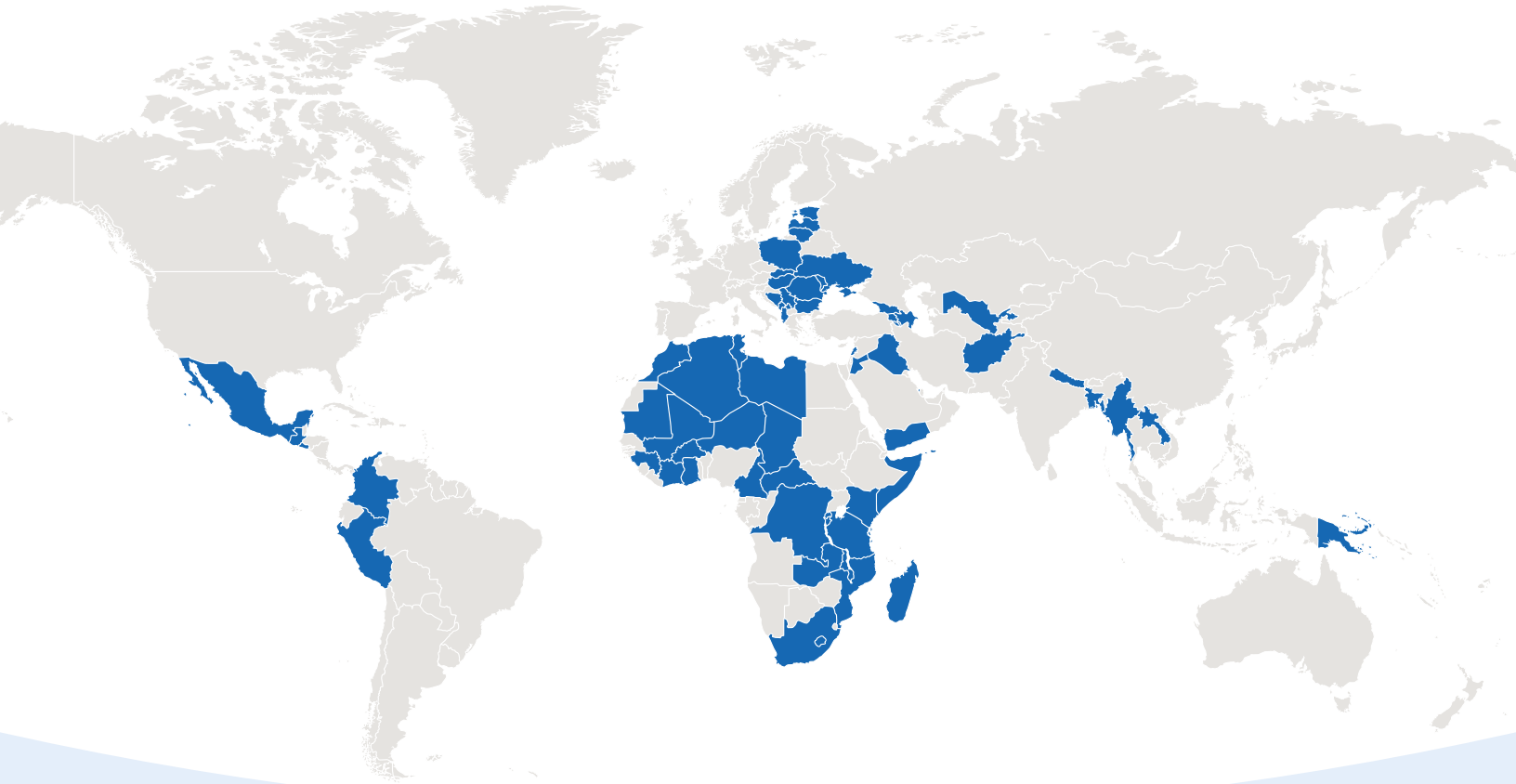


FIRST YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS

Since its launch in 2021, the GEEA Fund has advanced women's economic security around the world, expanding ongoing programming and launching new activities in support of Fund priorities. Activities have provided new training to support women's economic security, increased investments in companies to increase women's recruitment across higher-paying industries,

improved women's access to land rights, and supported women entrepreneurs and women-owned or -managed businesses.

In the GEEA Fund's first year, USAID and the State Department directly supported 58 activities across 63 countries, including opportunities identified through USAID's and the State Department's annual call for proposals to operating units.



GEEA-funded activities reported the following notable outcomes in its Fund's first year.

People Reached: By scaling existing programming and launching new efforts, the GEEA Fund reached more than half a million people around the world.

Women's Entrepreneurship: Activities supported more than 3,100 women-owned microenterprises to access loans, bank accounts, and other services

Women's Access to Well-Paying Jobs: Activities trained nearly 300 women in technical and leadership skills to advance their careers and coached 13 private-sector companies to advance women's empowerment across their organizations.

Women's Right to Own Property: Activities facilitated the proposal, adoption, and implementation of 109 specific pieces of land tenure and property rights legislation, including attention to the urban and rural poor. Collectively, these provided more than 64,000 women with legally recognized and documented tenure rights to land or marine areas.

FLAGSHIP INVESTMENT AREAS

The GEEA Fund focuses on three flagship areas to promote women's economic participation: enhancing care infrastructure, closing the gender digital divide, and promoting women in the sustainable economy.



Enhancing Care Infrastructure

Persistent gaps in care infrastructure have a pronounced effect on women, undermining their economic participation and earning potential. The GEEA Fund addresses these gaps by investing in care infrastructure in low- and middle-income countries, strengthening overall economic growth by increasing women's economic opportunities, improving child development, and expanding well-paying, decent jobs for care workers. The Fund supports research, policy changes, and new operational approaches as well as activities that improve the quality of employment and enhance labor and social protections for care workers.

Invest in Childcare Initiative: USAID committed up to \$50 million across five years (subject to availability of funding) to help launch the World Bank's Invest in Childcare Initiative, together with Australia, Canada, Germany, and private foundations. With at least \$180 million across five years, the public-private partnership: i) expands accessible, affordable, and high-quality care services in at least ten low-and middle-income countries to reach approximately 4 million children and 2 million parents; and ii) advances systems-level change to improve the policy and regulatory environments related to the provision of childcare, such as legal frameworks, quality assurance systems, and workforce conditions.



Closing the Gender Digital Divide

Gender-based inequalities in how women access, use, develop, and benefit from digital technology limit their ability to participate in the twenty-first-century economy. As countries continue to develop digital infrastructure, reducing access barriers is critical to ensuring equitable economic gains for all. The GEEA Fund accelerates progress to close the gender digital divide by supporting programs that advance digital access and affordability; develop relevant digital products and tools; provide digital literacy and skills training; promote online safety and security; and invest in sex-disaggregated data and research. The GEEA Fund supports, wherever possible, women-led solutions, products, and tools.

Women in the Digital Economy Fund and Initiative: The Women in Digital Economy Fund (WiDEF) is a joint effort

between USAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to identify, fund, and accelerate investment in proven solutions to close the gender digital divide. USAID committed up to \$50 million across four years, subject to the availability of funds, and the Gates Foundation committed \$10 million by the end of 2026, with at least half of each of these commitments focused on Africa. Building on the success of the Fund, and in response to an historic commitment from the Group of 20 Leaders to halve the digital gender gap by 2030, the White House and USAID launched the [Women in the Digital Economy Initiative](#). This initiative convenes partners from government, the private sector, philanthropies, and civil society organizations that have pledged contributions totaling more than \$515 million to align efforts that will do even more to bridge the gender digital divide.



Women in the Sustainable Economy

Women remain underrepresented in “green” and “blue” sectors—such as energy, environmental management, recycling, and many others—that increasingly provide well-paying jobs. To advance women's economic participation in these industries of the future, the GEEA Fund invests in programs that promote women's access to jobs, training, leadership opportunities, and finance in green and blue sectors.

Women in the Sustainable Economy Initiative: The [Women in the Sustainable Economy \(WISE\)](#) Initiative aims to bolster women's economic empowerment globally by expanding access to employment, training, leadership roles, and financial resources in the industries critical to our future and the future of our planet. To advance these priorities, partners from governments, the private sector, philanthropies, and civil society organizations have pledged contributions totaling [\\$1.4 billion](#), including a total of \$612 million in direct and aligned U.S. commitments. The WISE Initiative includes flagship investments to improve economic opportunities for women in the energy sector through USAID's Engendering Industries program; to increase women's access to climate finance through USAID's Climate Gender Equity Fund; to promote women's access to land rights through the State Department's Equal Stake in the Soil Initiative; and to strengthen women's inclusion in the blue economy through the State Department's Building Economic Inclusion via the Blue Economy initiative.



OTHER PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

Engendering Industries

Advancing the WISE Initiative, USAID's Engendering Industries program increases economic opportunities for women in lucrative, higher-paying, technical and leadership jobs within male-dominated sectors—including water, agriculture, mining, and information and communication technology, among others. With \$3.9 million in FY 2021 and FY 2022, the program also helps build the capacity of organizational leaders to advance gender equality and women's empowerment across their organizations, thereby advancing women's economic security and increasing organizational resilience, competitiveness, and business effectiveness.

Climate Gender Equity Fund

Advancing the WISE Initiative, the Climate Gender Equity Fund (CGEF), a public-private partnership, expands financial inclusion for women-led organizations and businesses focused on advancing sustainable economic growth by increasing access to climate finance for investment vehicles, intermediaries, businesses, and community-based organizations in developing countries. USAID has invested \$4 million in FY 2021 and FY 2022 and is joined by Amazon, Reckitt, the Visa Foundation, and the UPS Foundation as founding partners of this first-ever climate finance facility dedicated to women-led climate action.

African Women's Trade and Investment

USAID's African Women's Trade and Investment project empowers women in Africa's trade-related sectors. With \$5 million in FY 2021 and FY 2022, the project: i) enhances women's entrepreneurship by boosting exports, e-commerce, and closing the gender finance gap; ii) expands women's roles in trade-related activities, including global value chains, trade promotion, logistics, and export transportation; and iii) promotes women's leadership in private equity, venture capital, and banks investing in exporting industries.

WE-Champs—Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

The State Department's partnership with the Center for International Private Enterprise focuses on enhancing women's economic security by supporting women's Chambers of Commerce and business associations. With approximately \$3 million in FY 2021 and FY 2022, the project offers capacity building, networking, small grants, research, and advocacy support to these organizations and addresses systemic barriers to women's economic participation, including challenges faced by women affected by the Ukraine conflict. It spans 18 countries in Europe and Eurasia and plans to reach more than 10,000 women.

Young Afghan Women's Education and Leadership Development

Through its Education and Leadership Development for Young Afghan Women project, the State Department partnered with the Asian University for Women Support Foundation to provide educational opportunities for young Afghan women. With \$2 million in FY 2021 and FY 2022, the project empowers the next generation of Afghan women leaders, including through psychosocial support and post-education support for employment, funding scholarships focused on business, human rights, and leadership education.

Empowering Women Science and Technology Entrepreneurs in APEC Economies

Advancing the WISE Initiative, the State Department has provided \$850,000 in FY 2021 and FY 2022 toward projects that provide female entrepreneurs across Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member economies with training, mentorship, and networking opportunities to expand business ventures across various sectors. To further support opportunities for female entrepreneurs, activities have funded the Global Innovation Through Science and Technology (GIST) Asia Pacific Pitch Competition in 2022 and the APEC Catalyst Pitch Competition in 2023.



PARTNERSHIPS

The GEEA Fund exponentially increases the impact of its work through activities that engage with a wide range of partners globally. In its first year, this included more than 125 governments, private-sector companies, foundations, and civil society organizations that have contributed resources and expertise to increase innovation and impact that furthers women's economic security. Eighty percent of these partners are local, including host governments and local private-sector companies and civil society organizations.

LOOKING FORWARD

The GEEA Fund is making substantial progress in advancing women's economic security. It is expanding women's access to well-paying, quality jobs and promoting women's entrepreneurship. Through flagship activities, it is improving care infrastructure, expanding women's participation in the digital economy, and advancing women's and girls' leadership in the sustainable economy. By launching new partnerships and expanding ongoing successful programming, the GEEA Fund is unlocking women's economic potential and increasing economic security and prosperity for all.

