



Australian Government

INVESTING IN WOMEN

SMART ECONOMICS

AN INITIATIVE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

Campaigns and Communities of Practice



Who we are

Investing in Women: Women in Inclusive Sustainable Economic Recovery (IW) is a multi-country Australian Government initiative in Southeast Asia that seeks to accelerate women's economic empowerment. Through increased and equitable opportunities in the private sector, IW contributes to inclusive, sustainable economic recovery and growth in Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Myanmar. Our objective is to support women to thrive in the workplace and succeed in business.



Building on the results, partnerships and lessons established under the first seven years of the program (2016-2023), IW works to extend and deepen Australia's contribution to advancing gender equality in Southeast Asia by influencing and growing an ecosystem of policymakers, business leaders, capital providers and women's economic empowerment actors.



*(Clockwise from left)
Entrepreneurs participate in an impact accelerator program in Indonesia; IW staff pose for a photo following an annual planning workshop; IW campaign partners discuss and share their learnings at a workshop in Manila*

(All photos: IW).



IW uses innovative approaches to catalyse women's economic participation and strengthen the enabling environment for women's economic empowerment, including:



Workplace Gender Equality

We support Business Coalitions that work with influential businesses on shifting workplace cultures, practices, and policy barriers to achieve workplace gender equality, with member companies together employing more than one million people;



Enabling Policy Reforms

We work with credible local institutions to strengthen the evidence base and drive collective action needed to influence and inform policy reform that supports women's equal economic participation, particularly related to the care economy;



Campaigns and Communities of Practice

We support locally driven campaigns that promote positive examples of gender equality to strengthen public support for women's economic participation. Through fostering a community of gender equality advocates, IW will continuously build evidence that supports the broader adoption of progressive attitudes and behaviours; and



Gender Lens Investing

We partner with industry players to increase capital providers' demand for Gender Lens Investing strategies and products, catalysing the supply of financial instruments available to small businesses owned or led by women, and investing in the growth of SMEs that support women through a 'fund of funds' strategy.

Campaigns and Communities of Practice

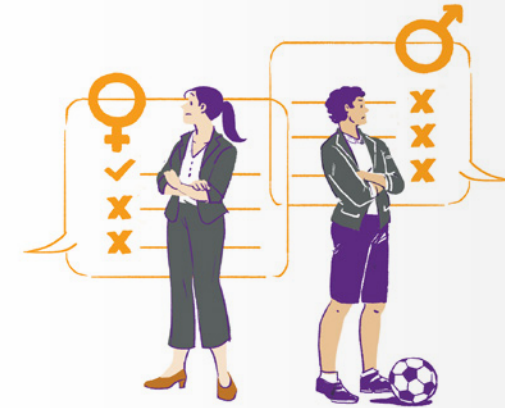
Across the countries in which we work, progress towards gender equality is evident but longstanding gender norms continue to exert a strong influence. There are people whose attitudes lean toward gender equality but many of them feel unable to translate those attitudes into behaviours because they think gender inequality is still more widely practised and endorsed. There are also people who practise gender-equal behaviours, but many of them do not advocate for others to behave similarly because they fear being isolated, criticised, or ostracised.

IW identifies these people as early adopters—and supports them as catalysts for change through a three-pronged approach of



The combination of these interventions is designed to take early adopters on a change journey—from attitude-progressive to behaviour-progressive and from behaviour-progressive to advocate.

What are gender norms?



Gender norms are rules that describe how people are expected to act in a social context because of their gender. They are nested in the mind, produced and reproduced through social interaction, and embedded in formal and informal institutions.¹ Gender norms intersect with other norms related to age, ethnicity, class, disability, and religion, among others. Changing gender norms requires changing institutions and power dynamics. Gender norms can change when enough people act differently.²

IW supports locally led action on gender norms in several ways - by collaborating with companies on workplace gender equality policies, policymakers on reforming enabling policies, and investors on gendered practices that govern the flow of capital. Through IW's Campaigns and CoPs, we support local actors to engage with gender norms as perceptions held in place by social expectations - including both empirical (what people see others do) and normative expectations (what people believe others approve of).³

¹ Cislighi, B., & Heise, L. (2019). "Gender norms and social norms: differences, similarities and why they matter in prevention science." *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 42(2), 407–422. [ps://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.13008](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.13008)

² Harper, C., Marcus, R., George, R., D'Angelo, S. and Samman, E. (2020). *Gender, power and progress: How norms change*. ALIGN/ODI. <http://www.alignplatform.org/gender-power-progress>

³ Bicchieri, C. (2017). *Norms in the wild: How to diagnose, measure, and change social norms*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Why Campaigns?

Campaigns have the power to change what people see others do (empirical expectations). By encouraging people to participate in social discourse and openly share their views, campaigns can also change what people think others expect them to do (normative expectations). Given those two objectives, IW supports campaigns that aim for both breadth and depth.

Breadth

IW supports locally driven campaigns that continuously expose early adopters to examples, arguments and evidence of gender equality. To do this, our partners analyse where the early adopters are, what kind of content they consume and who they listen to, to ensure that the messages deployed through campaigns reach them. Influencers and key opinion leaders play an important role by transparently endorsing gender equality.

Depth

Local partners ensure that campaign messages resonate with early adopters. They speak to the audiences' individual and collective experience, appeal to deeply held values, and use a language they can relate to. The most powerful messages address pain points, present convincing arguments, and call the audiences to action. Local partners bring a highly contextualised understanding of the issues that matter to early adopters and learn from audience responses.



Why Communities of Practice?

IW recognises the need for local leadership, innovation, and action to address barriers to women's economic empowerment. This is why IW also supports partners in establishing Communities of Practice (CoPs) for gender equality advocates. CoPs refer to groups of people who "share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly."⁴



Gender advocates - whether organisations or individuals - have varying levels of competence, capacity and capability. Effective gender advocacy requires careful preparation and a skilful approach to be inclusive and avoid inadvertently reinforcing the gender norms it sets out to address. CoPs offer a platform for advocates to learn from experience, reflection and each other.

⁴ Wenger-Trayner, E. and Wenger-Trayner, B. (2015). Introduction to communities of practices: A brief overview of the concepts and its uses. Wenger-Trayner; Global theorists and consultants. <https://www.wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>

Why Evidence-building?

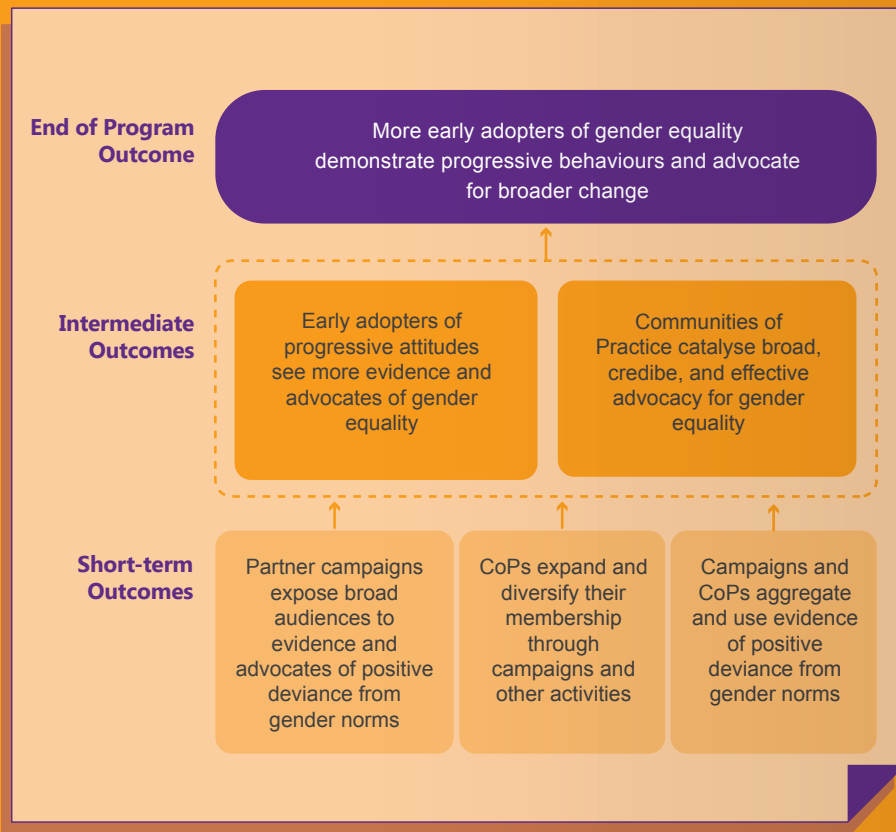
To change social expectations, it is crucial to build and share credible evidence that gender equality is more widely practised and endorsed than people think. IW and local partners build this evidence as a starting point for implementing campaigns and CoPs. At the same time, evidence drives innovation for impact. It enables IW and partners to identify lessons from implementation, replicate impactful approaches, and course-correct if needed.



To validate the hypothesis that there is progress towards gender equality, IW commissions the Social Norms, Attitudes, and Practices Survey (SNAPS). Once in every two to three years, the survey asks a large sample of 18-to-40-year-olds in the countries where we work about what they think, what they do, what they see others do, and what they think others expect them to do in relation to gendered care and economic roles. Partners use SNAPS data as social proof—by highlighting the change that is already happening to accelerate broader change.

Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change affirms that IW's role is to accelerate - not create - social change. Individuals are already adopting gender equality, but change at a societal level is happening slowly.



How has this work evolved?

Awareness-raising campaigns that IW supported from 2018 to 2019 revealed pockets of change within 18-to-40-year-olds in urban areas. Insights from the campaigns pointed to opportunities to work with cohorts as early adopters of gender equality. Learning from this experience, in 2019, IW formalised a focus on gender norms by working with local partners to deploy evidence of change towards gender equality.



There is also evidence of positive shifts in gender equal attitudes and behaviours among audiences exposed to the campaigns.

These achievements are the result of local partners' commitment to implement creative, innovative, and powerful campaigns. These are further discussed in the following case studies.

Case study

1

Authenticity is key

In 2022, ID Comm, an Indonesian public relations and communication firm, collaborated with influencers, gender advocacy organisations, and media, to run **Bersama Berperan (Sharing Roles)**, a digital campaign that encouraged sharing of childcare and income-earning roles within households.

The campaign achieved a total reach of more than 36 million through social media posts, webinars, podcasts, and media pickups



Konde.co, a prominent Indonesian women's media group, uses engaging content such as comic strips to invite conversations on gender equality.

(Photo: Konde.co)

ID Comm gave partners total decision-making power on how to best engage with their followers. Bersama Berperan messages from influencers were mostly unbranded; they did not feature any sponsor logos, only hashtags. This allowed these influencers to own the messages, comfortably share their thoughts on gender roles and authentically develop connection with their audiences.

As a result, their followers became more open in sharing their own gender experiences and stories, which exposed even more people to evidence of change and informed how the influencers shaped subsequent messages. This led to a cycle of learning between the influencers and their followers.



Budi Komala, a blogger, photographer and content creator, shares his perspectives as a husband and a father on gender roles.

(Photo: Budi Komala)



Case study

2

Trend surfing for impact

CARE International in Vietnam (CARE), an international NGO, partnered with communication agency TIVA to run the Nha NhieU Cot campaign (A House Has Many Pillars). They challenged the view that men are the “pillar of the home” as the primary income earners and that women are the “warmth of the home” as the primary carers.

To engage early adopters, Nha NhieU Cot leveraged trending social issues to provide hard-hitting gender analysis. For example, in November 2022, Nha NhieU Cot directly called out a television network for objectifying women in their FIFA World Cup commentary program. The program featured male sportscasters giving expert analysis on the match, while female commentators were there just to cheer for their assigned football team, with cameras drawing attention to their clothes and bodies.

Nha NhieU Cot's clear and credible callout went viral, gaining hundreds of comments discussing a wide range of gender issues, from female representation and agency, to body autonomy and gender roles. After a few days, the television network removed all so-called “hot girl” commentators from the show, changed the format and started to invite more female athletes instead.



Nha NhieU Cot has gradually become a trusted source of gender knowledge among Vietnamese youths.

Since running, the campaign has gained more than 50,000 followers across Facebook and Instagram. By the end of the campaign, 84% of audiences surveyed said that Nha NhieU Cot had influenced their views on gender roles at home and at work; 69% said they were more willing to demonstrate gender equality despite possible social sanctions; and 56% were more ready to speak out against gender inequality.



Case study

3

Going deep into your niche

QBO, an innovative platform that supports Filipino startups, ramped up their Startup Pinay (Filipino Women in Startups) campaign with support from IW to normalise the role of women in tech through a series of public education campaigns and community engagement activities. The campaign featured a large video strategy, which reached millions on social media with messages that showcased women as tech startup founders and invited women interested in startups to participate in QBO activities.

Going deeper than the online campaign, QBO created opportunities for industry stakeholders to meet in-person and discuss gendered challenges faced by startup founders. Leveraging Philippine Startup Week, the largest startup industry event in the country, QBO put a spotlight on challenges in work-life balance, the equalizing potential of technology, and gender biases in investment decision-making.

Women who joined the conference reported gaining more confidence in showcasing their skills and taking up leadership roles. Ideas to disrupt gender bias in investment decisions were also floated in the discussions, including intentionally building ecosystems and networks that support women.



With IW support, QBO integrated panel discussions on gender equality and women's economic empowerment in the agenda for Philippine Startup Week, the country's largest startup industry event.

(Photo: QBO)

Case study

4

Exploring contextually appropriate channels

In Indonesia, IW partnered with Rumah KitaB, a research-based policy institute that specialises in progressive interpretations of Islamic text to address social challenges. They launched a campaign called Muslimah Bekerja (Working Muslim Women), which equipped early adopters and advocates with arguments for women's rights to work based on Islamic text. A key achievement from the partnership was the publication of Fikih Perempuan Bekerja (Islamic Jurisprudence on Working Women), a book that presents arguments for the sharing of caring and economic roles across genders.



A religious leader in Indonesia participates in Rumah KitaB's workshop on Islamic narratives that support working women.

(Photo: Rumah KitaB)

Rumah KitaB understood that broader change required religious leaders to advocate for the arguments they had developed. The campaign invested in building the capacity of religious leaders to speak to feminist Islamic narratives. Religious leaders who participated in Rumah KitaB's training highlighted the value of new information and highly contextualised resources on working women.

Involvement with the Rumah KitaB campaign also enabled religious leaders to reflect on their own gender experiences, with women ulama noting their experiences of gender discrimination in the workplace and at home.



Case study

5

Transforming allies into advocates

ECUE is a social enterprise that aims to promote gender equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and society. In 2020, they established the Vietnam Gender Equality Movement (VGEM), a community of gender equality advocates connected through a social media platform. In setting up and growing VGEM, ECUE deliberately targeted journalists and media practitioners, recognising the media shapes and influences the discussion on gender issues. ECUE developed a training series that supported journalists to use a gender lens in their reportage, including by connecting them to gender experts.

Nguyen Thi Ngan Giang, who used to lead the Lifestyle Department at online magazine Zing News, shared that after joining VGEM, she was able to get a clearer understanding on gender issues. This motivated her to establish a dedicated section for gender analysis, diversity, equity and inclusion.

In addition, as part of management, she encouraged her all-female team to explore opportunities for career growth and advancement and to try to achieve work-life balance. She also made participation in VGEM's gender training a performance requirement for her direct reports. After attending a VGEM course, one of Ngan Giang's reporters decided to pursue a master's degree in gender and journalism.



Nguyen Thi Ngan Giang presents at a workshop organised by ECUE and VGEM.

(Photo: ECUE)

Case study

6

Creating space for collective action

Edukasyon.ph is a Filipino education technology social enterprise that connects students to education opportunities through an online platform.



In 2018, IW supported Edukasyon for the Future of Young Pinays (Filipino Women) campaign, which brought together and profiled a group of 10 young women in male-dominated education pathways and careers to inspire women in similar age groups. These youth ambassadors engaged almost 23,000 students in urban centres across the country through campus roadshows and education fairs and reached more than 700,000 on social media with their inspiring stories.



Youth ambassadors for the Future of Young Pinays Campaign by Edukasyon.ph take photos during the launch of the campaign in 2018.

(Photo: Edukasyon.ph)

The Edukasyon campaign demonstrated the power of relatable role models. The campaign not only targeted sectors with few women role models but also focused on young women close in age to their target audience with similar circumstances, challenges, and aspirations.

Building on this success, Edukasyon later launched another IW-supported campaign to promote women and men's participation in technical-vocational tracks not traditionally associated with their gender. Called Yaring Pinay (Made by Filipino Women), this campaign resulted in a resource for gender-equal communication for technical-vocational education institutions and employers as well as a community of gender advocates.

Learn more about IW <https://investinginwomen.asia/>

 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/investing-in-women/>

 <https://www.facebook.com/InvestingInWomenAsia>

 <https://www.instagram.com/investinginwomen/>

 <https://twitter.com/iwasean>

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