



WEAmericas: Women’s Entrepreneurship in the Americas



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LAUNCHED BY PRESIDENT OBAMA at the 2012 Summit of the Americas and part of his Spark Global Entrepreneurship initiative, the Women’s Entrepreneurship in the Americas (WEAmericas) initiative leverages public-private partnerships to encourage inclusive economic growth in the Western Hemisphere. The initiative reduces barriers and increases opportunities for women entrepreneurs to start and grow small and medium-size enterprises by improving: access to markets; access to capital; access to skills and capacity building; and access to leadership opportunities.

PARTNERSHIPS

More than 40 WEAmericas partnerships have been developed since 2012, with partners including the Walmart Foundation, Goldman Sachs, Thunderbird for Good, Cherie Blair Foundation, the Multilateral Investment Fund, the Inter-American Investment Corporation, Ernst and Young, and others. Over 20,000 women in more than 20 countries are expected to benefit from these partnerships by the end of 2015 and the initiative is on track to help over 100,000 women by 2019.

WEAMERICAS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Access to Markets

WEAmericas increases access to markets by connecting women-owned businesses to global supplier databases. It identifies best practices for sourcing from women-owned businesses and creates incentives to advance their successes at the national and international level.

Through partnerships with WEConnect International in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico, and Peru, WEAmericas is increasing market access for more than 1,000 women-owned businesses by providing business registration and certification services, as well as highlighting opportunities for supply chain integration with multinational organizations.

After receiving her WEConnect certification, Peruvian entrepreneur Maria Luisa Pujalt attended the Food and Beverage Expo in Miami, gained significant exposure at the show, and as a result, is in negotiations with an exclusive distributor in the United States.

Access to Skills and Capacity Building

WEAmericas connects entrepreneurs with business mentors to advise them as their businesses grow and to help them develop critical skills through training in business management and entrepreneurship.

More than 30 technology experts and approximately 400 women entrepreneurs are partnering for a series of four WEAmericas TechCamps in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, and El Salvador, to identify low-cost, easy-to-implement technological solutions to the challenges they face in growing their businesses.

Access to Capital

WEAmericas increases women’s access to capital by highlighting both the need for and benefits of expanding financial inclusion for women. The initiative promotes the adoption of best practices in service and product delivery by financial institutions through the development of new models that leverage technology and regulatory frameworks to expand women’s access to capital.

The Inter-American Development Bank Group (IDBG) is providing up to \$110 million in technical assistance grants and loans to benefit approximately 100,000 women entrepreneurs by 2019.

Juliana Mejía, Colombian Handbag Designer and CEO of Divina Castidad Handbags, has grown her business by more than 2,000 percent and more than doubled her workforce since participating in the first WEAmericas IVLP in 2012.

Access to Leadership Opportunities

WEAmericas connects women with networks, organizations, and business opportunities across Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada, and supports programs that facilitate dialogue between women leaders throughout the Americas.

The WEAmericas International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) provides an annual three-week training exchange to strengthen the business skills of women entrepreneurs and organizations that support them.

For more information about how to partner with WEAmericas, please contact: WEAmericasInitiative@state.gov.

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