



# WOMEN FORWARD

I N T E R N A T I O N A L



Women Forward International  
*Advance Women to Advance Humanity*





## Letter from the President

With its smashingly successful first year, Women Forward International (WFI) is poised to expand its partnerships and transform the lives of tens of thousands of women and men globally.

Together we are discovering innovative ways to address economic inequality, forge new methods of peace-building, advance sustainable farming and health systems, and empower women leaders in underserved communities.

Our partner, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), has enthusiastically identified our programs as key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and regularly publishes our scholarly reports on the UN website. Together with UNITAR, we will co-host our June 10th event, The Vanguard, in which our implementing teams from California to Paris to Afghanistan will present our action oriented research to advance women.

In 2021, WFI's ten programs will:

- ☐ Establish a business accelerator for women in Mexico and advance businesswomen in Morocco
- ☐ Enable more gender equity for women in the coffee and cocoa and other farming industries in Africa and Latin America
- ☐ Increase political voice and participation for refugee women in Europe
- ☐ Increase investments in women-run businesses throughout Central and South America
- ☐ Relieve food insecurity for senior women in the United States
- ☐ Help inaugurate a more environmentally sustainable fashion industry
- ☐ Launch the first private women's university in Afghanistan

WFI enables the next generation of leaders to work towards unity, collaboration, and service with influential partner organizations, transforming the communities and countries in which they operate. Our scholarly teams' innovative ideas allow us to bring resources where they are needed most, despite the challenges presented by the global pandemic – from holding a leadership workshop in Belgium for refugee women in Europe to launching a new line of handbags with sustainable materials benefitting women artisans in conflict zones.

We invite you to explore the mission and work of WFI in the following pages, and we look forward to welcoming you to our community of Snow Leopards – those who dare to walk in the Vanguard! We thank you for your interest in our mission to advance women to advance humanity.

Sincerely,

Kent Davis-Packard, Ph.D.  
President & Executive Director  
Women Forward International



## Background and Mission of Women Forward International

Graduate students of international relations and public policy are among the most creative and inspired to bring about positive changes in their communities and in the countries in which they choose to work. They thirst to make their research of service to others. Too often, however, academic research on international relations focuses on the esoteric and does not consider the real impact on individuals and members of a community. The analytical skills learned in graduate school do not necessarily directly apply to the real world. Few programs bridge this gap between academia and practice, and fewer still address the empowerment and full contributions of women to society.

### Mission

Women Forward International puts research into service to the world. We create unique partnerships that lead to behavioral changes that advance women to advance humanity.

### How We Work

Recognizing that change comes from transformations in consciousness and culture rather than merely the enactment of laws and policies, WFI underlines to emerging leaders from graduate schools and all levels of management within our partner organizations the absolute necessity of gender equality in achieving their missions. We inspire these organizations to challenge and transform cultural norms at both the theoretical and operational levels, and address areas of need for greater equality in five key arenas: economic empowerment, education, leadership in conflict resolution; and sustainable systems.

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WFI's visionary model of experiential learning is changing the game for graduate education in international affairs.

*Sienna Tompkins  
Georgetown University, Walsh School of Foreign Service*

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Many of my students said they 'never knew what a difference it makes to study an international security issue through a gender lens.' Already Women Forward International's support for this project has been life-changing for our students.

*Ambassador Nancy McElDowney*

*National Security Advisor to Vice President Kamala Harris, former Director of Georgetown University's Master of Science of Foreign Service Program*

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I am so moved by the efforts of all the constituencies affiliated with WFI and the most prescient understanding that the Arts are vital means for communicating, displaying and endorsing social justice around the world.

*Janice Koch, Ph.D.*

*Professor Emerita of Science Education, Hofstra University*

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Truly a spellbinding aura you helped to create this morning...you and your colleagues and the panel gave all those avid listeners and aspiring agents of change some very profound shoulders to stand on!

*Gerald Hildebrand*

*Director of the Center for Social Impact, Lynn University-  
about our event "A Call for a New Humanity"*

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Instead of typical think-tank talking heads and the drone of stats and theories, [WFI] presented a living sense of courageous, creative women charting a real path to change.

*Ellis Pines*

*Vice President, Brand Strategy, Radancy, LLC*

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*Women Forward International* partners with organizations and faculty over a number of years and therefore has a profound impact on the way these institutions think about women and the value of their contributions to the economic and political life of their communities. Each spring the students present their study results, best practices, and recommendations together with the sponsoring institutions in collaboration with WFI's primary partner, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The organizational partners, faculty, and students then disseminate the results through their networks and online publications. Through this outreach process, the studies inform the communities who will most benefit and be a force-multiplier for effecting real change. Concurrently, WFI supports the implementation of the key scholarly recommendations in collaboration with the partner organizations, ensuring immediate and lasting impact.

## Measuring Impact

The impact of the program is assessed by the organizational response to the students' recommendations. The key focus is the degree to which they implement the recommendations or carry forward their own set of resulting conclusions during phase two of each project. Impact can also be measured by the number of organizations involved in each project, and the resources they themselves dedicate to carrying forward the recommendations. From an academic and young leaders' standpoint, the program's impact can be assessed by how many students choose jobs upon graduation that promote women's empowerment, and/or continue to work with the organizational partners on related projects.

Partnering *Women Forward International* with the United Nations allows the organization to serve more communities, amplify its impact, and complement the United Nation's existing programs. WFI's ever-growing Advisory Committee of approximately 60 experts in their fields continues to lend its support and expertise. The Counsel of Leopards, WFI's network of influential leaders – women and men – who have participated in our work to empower women and men are eager to contribute to our development and impact long into the future.

There is no better time to support a program dedicated to women's advancement in this historically transformational moment when the impossible becomes possible. Human equality is becoming a living reality, and *Women Forward International* is playing a key role in this process.



## 2020-2021 Impact Highlights

### Women's Economic Empowerment

- WFI's project with Pro Mujer and Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs led to the creation of a 'gender scorecard' now being used by 17 companies in Mexico to identify gaps in supporting and investing in women entrepreneurs.
- WFI's project with The Ananda Group and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government resulted in an association and business accelerator for women in the plant-based food industries that contributes to Mexico's achievement of nine of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- This Mexican business accelerator will provide information and training specifically designed for women entrepreneurs; it will offer a platform for networking, cross-learning and mutual support; and through the collaboration among members, the sector will accomplish projects with greater impact and boost the fulfillment of its shared mission for the benefit of humanity, animals and the planet.

## Women and Sustainable Systems

- ❑ WFI's project with the Partnership for Gender Equity (PGE) and Yale University refines a Gender Equity Index for at least two influential companies who work with a total of 10,000 farming families in Latin America to improve their services by reaching more women. This collaboration will help PGE to expand their program to more women in coffee farming communities and new agricultural sectors such as cocoa, tea, and spices, among others.
- ❑ As a result of WFI's collaboration with PGE, Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs created a practicum program class for WFI projects that advance women for the advancement of humanity.

## Women's Leadership in Conflict Resolution

- ❑ WFI's project with the European Network of Migrant Women and Sciences Po in Paris led to the creation of a capacity-building toolkit that will be used to train and empower 370 refugees in its first year.
- ❑ WFI's project with Georgetown University and nonprofits in Afghanistan to empower Afghan women negotiators in the peace process, our current scholarly team is creating with faculty experts a participatory toolkit for their inclusion in the negotiation process.

## Women and Education

- ❑ WFI's project with the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL) and Lynn University to design the first private, women's only university in Afghanistan has already begun transforming mindsets on women and education in the country. [The United Nations Academic Impact \(UNAI\) initiative published an article about WFI's project on their website.](#)





## UN Partnership



### WFI Publications with the United Nations

(UN Women, UNITAR, and UNICEF)

Because WFI's university research projects meet the criteria necessary to make the Sustainable Development Goals a living reality, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) has published each of our university client-based research reports. Each will also be made available to all UN member states, UN Women, and the wider public via [UNITAR's website](#).



*WFI President Dr. Kent Davis-Packard meets with Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women*



# New Research & Implementation Projects for 2020-2021

This year, Women Forward International launched ten research and implementation programs. They are the result of our implementing our scholarly teams' key recommendations from our six programs in 2019/2020, and beginning four new action-oriented research programs.



## Women's Rights and the Peace Process in Afghanistan

### Georgetown University School of Foreign Service

This project implements key recommendations from the WFI-supported Georgetown University School of Foreign Service scholarly teams in 2019-2020 for Women's Activities and Social Services Association and Women for Afghan Women. These recommendations include the promotion of women's rights in Islam as an integral part of the peace-building process. This year, WFI will support a team of scholars and students at Georgetown University under the direction of Ambassador Melanne Verweir and Dr. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana to produce materials including A Toolkit on Islamic Sources of Peace, Democracy and Women's Rights for Afghan Women Negotiators that engage Afghan negotiators and other key actors such as religious leaders to create the unity required to stabilize Afghanistan.



## Promoting Women's Leadership in Mexico for a Conscious and Regenerative Humanity

**Harvard University Kennedy School of Government  
in Partnership  
with the Ananda Group**

In 2020, the Ananda Group benefited from the research and insights from a Harvard Kennedy School team as a result of its partnership with Women Forward International. The main recommendations from the HKS team include: a) Support for plant-based networks and associations; b) Investment towards gender-specific programming; and c) Further investment in advocacy and public relations partnerships. With the support of WFI this year, Ananda is proceeding with the recommendation in collaboration with HKS to support plant-based business networks by spearheading the incorporation of an association that brings together this early stage, mission driven and majority women-led sector. The association will provide information and training specifically designed for these entrepreneurs; it will offer a platform for networking, cross-learning and mutual support; and through the collaboration among members, the sector will accomplish projects with greater impact and boost the fulfillment of its shared mission for the benefit of humanity, animals and the planet. Ananda will also implement the recommendation regarding gender-specific programming through the development of trainings and events designed for the Mexican plant-based sector where around 75% of businesses have women founders. In addition, the association will be led by a woman President and will include a formal Gender Equity Committee to promote the continued presence of women in leadership positions, especially as the sector and the businesses that comprise it grow.





## Changing the System: Enhancing Participation of Young Migrant and Refugee Women in International Political Processes through Intercultural Feminist Action-Research

**The Paris Institute of Political Studies in Partnership with The European Network of Migrant Woman & The Rights Lab**

Scholars from The Paris Institute of Political Studies (Science Po) will find, define, and analyze the major barriers and gaps that hinder migrant and refugee women's participation in international decision-making processes, with a specific focus on young women, and come up with recommendations and methodology on how to bridge them. Their research will be designed as an action oriented plan for the European Network of Migrant Women, an organization that strives to combat discrimination and promote the rights and interests of migrant and refugee women within Europe through coordinated advocacy, exchange of information, capacity building activities, projects and events and representing ENoMW members at both the European and the National level. Could this global crisis provide an opportunity for addressing systemic flaws and barriers and creating a more equal society? The answer to this question lies in part in the participation of women migrants and refugees in regional and international decision-making processes. The research will culminate with a participatory workshop to conduct in-depth analysis and co-create jointly with young migrant women a methodology for their political participation and a toolkit for young migrant women's participation in international processes on women's human rights.





## Breaking Barriers to Expand Opportunities for Women-Led Businesses in Latin America

### Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) in Collaboration with Pro Mujer

A leading women's non-profit development organization, Pro Mujer, will carry forward with WFI's support recommendations from the 2019-2020 Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) team. This project will push forward strategies to break barriers limiting women entrepreneurs from raising and accessing investment capital in Mexico and Central America at large. These strategies included developing a gender strategy geared towards facilitating capital flows to women-led businesses such as gathering gender-disaggregated data and curating inclusive marketing campaigns; encouraging business development services (BDS) providers to expand opportunities for women-led businesses by forging international partnerships and inclusive programming; and deepening the relationship between BDS providers and investors to create an investment path for women entrepreneurs.



## A New Horizon for Women's Education in Afghanistan

**Lynn University Social Impact Laboratory  
in Partnership with the Afghan Institute of Learning**

Many universities in Afghanistan lack a quality curriculum, leaving them unable to provide quality educational services for women. Currently, a university just for women does not exist in Afghanistan. The university options are co-ed, restricting women due to tradition and culture, and leaving them unable to take full advantage of a university. A women's university would not only encourage more women to pursue a higher education, but will allow women to begin or complete their studies free of distractions while still being able to obtain gainful employment. Lynn University's Student Research Team will explore potential solutions to the obstacles that stand in the way of opening a women's university in Afghanistan. This university would be run and supported by the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), with Women Forward International (WFI) in an advisory role. The research would answer the key questions necessary to proceed: What are some of the political, social and economic challenges present in Afghanistan that prevent the establishment of a women's university? What factors stand in the way of women pursuing their tertiary education in Afghanistan? What is the best curriculum that can be developed to provide women with the necessary education and skills to obtain employment after graduation? What are some of the most effective logistical strategies for opening a women's university in Afghanistan? What core values are important for AIL's curriculum, and how will AIL ensure that the women's university emphasizes these? What courses and skills are required for the successful development of a new curriculum for a women's university taking into consideration the political, social and cultural context of Afghanistan?





## All of Us Taking Care of All of Us: Food Rescue for Senior Women in the United States

### Stanford University Community Health and Prevention Research Program in Partnership with the White Pony Express

Building on their 2019-2020 project, WFI will support the White Pony Express (WPE) to guide an impact study by a team of Stanford University's Master of Science in Community Health and Prevention Research Program students on the effects of their Food Rescue program, specifically on their newly expanded services to the senior women population since the COVID-19 pandemic. They will answer the key questions: what happens to senior women with few resources who are among the most vulnerable population in American society, and how can communities put into practice the principle of "all of us taking care of all of us?" WPE currently helps 12 agencies that specifically serve low-income seniors, more than half of which contacted us after the pandemic hit with a desperate need for food. Through this project, WPE will put a more advanced measurement system in place to evaluate their performance and outcomes. This impact study will help WPE capture data at defined points through interviews, surveys, observation and literature reviews and articulating WPE's deeper impacts on hunger, health and well-being. WPE will use this data to drive decision-making related to programmatic strategy and programming elements.





## Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in Morocco through Microfinance

### **William Marshall Rice University School of Social Sciences in Partnership with Silatech**

In a turbulent world of political conflict and social unrest, young people have fallen prey to poverty, unemployment, and marginalization. During all this, it has become essential to find innovative solutions to the problem's youth are facing. There is an urgent need to not only prevent the problems but to eliminate them entirely to help young people take control of their future and influence their communities positively. A student team from Rice University will carry out research focused on micro-finance and methods for empowering women-led businesses in Morocco for Silatech, an international social development NGO that promotes the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals through the economic empowerment of young entrepreneurs. The student team will research the impact of implementing policies and programs in Morocco for the creation of jobs for youth, and the challenges women face in particular in participating in this job market. Silatech is an International social development nonprofit non-governmental organization that works on connecting youth wherever they are to jobs and enable resources for them to establish and sustain successful enterprises through providing innovative solutions to its local, regional and international partners. The organization promotes large-scale job creation, entrepreneurship, access to capital and markets, and the participation of young people in economic development thus contributing to the attainment of several Sustainable Development Goals.



## Growing the Coffee and Cocoa Sector through Equity for Women Farmers

### **Yale University Jackson Institute for Global Affairs in Collaboration with the Partnership for Gender Equity**

A student team from Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs will undertake a research project for the Partnership for Gender Equity, a US-based, women-led, not-for-profit social enterprise that works globally to accelerate gender equity and social inclusion along the coffee and cocoa supply chains. PGE is eager to leverage the team of researchers to investigate the following areas and validate key aspects of their proposed approach: 1) How do sustainability agencies within the coffee and cocoa sectors typically integrate gender equity as a cross-cutting issue into their bi-lateral or multilateral funded projects, when a gender focus is required by funders? How can the integration be improved or systematized by a third party? 2) How do PGE's five criteria for gender equity in cooperatives relate to the operational functionality of large volume supply aggregators for coffee and cocoa? Based on the aggregators' similarities and differences to cooperative ways of working, where and how does the self-assessment need to be refined? The team will carry out refined assessment with supply aggregators across four countries and regions: Indonesia, Honduras (Promecafe), Peru, East Africa (Uganda or Ethiopia). Finally, the team will answer the question: How can data related to gender equity be successfully embedded into digital applications that strive to create better access to coffee and cocoa supply chain data and increase traceability and/or transparency in these sectors? significant supply chains – and all of the families and communities that are related to them. This project will expand the reach PGE's business development, enabling their tools to reach more people in the supply chain, and their expertise to be integrated into the breadth of sustainability efforts.





## Developing Tools to Assess Cost-Effective Equitable & Environmentally Sustainable Food Systems

### **Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in Partnership with the Sustainable Food Trust**

A team of graduates from Cornell University's Agriculture and Life Sciences graduate program will undertake a research project for the Sustainable Food Trust, a non-profit organization that works to accelerate the transition to more sustainable food and farming systems that nourish the health of both people and planet. The student team will conduct research on approaches needed to ensure food producers are financially accountable for any negative impacts of their production systems on the environment, public health and social equity including gender, and appropriately awarded for equivalent beneficial outcomes. Cornell faculty will support and mentor the students in this initiative. Sustainable Food Trust will provide the tool and also support and mentor the students in this initiative.





## Designs for the New Humanity

### Partnership with Blumera

Blumera, a luxury fashion brand focused on high-vibratory creations, is ever-seeking to be in harmony with the earth and lessen the impact fashion makes on it, while creating collections of beauty to uplift the wearer. Blumera is looking to utilize unusual materials to create new collections. Currently, the brand is making couture handbags from brass and up-cycled wood. Blumera is interested in working with a team of students to research, identify, and/or innovate new unusual interesting sustainable materials to be used to create a new collection. The team of students would also be tasked to identify a community of highly skilled women who can be taught to work with this material to create the new couture Blumera collection under the creative direction of Mehera Blum.



## Major Activities Planned for 2021

### WFI Arts Counsel

On April 22, 2021, WFI will convene its first Arts Counsel meeting. Spearheaded by Wesley Spencer, WFI's Director of Arts Partnerships & Strategic Development, Women Forward International's Arts Counsel will partner trailblazing artists with WFI's scholarly teams. Together they will use the transformative power of art to address international relations and bring a new consciousness towards human unity.



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So inspiring to meet leaders from across the world sharing their thoughts on new humanity. Thrilled to share my poem which is recited by all the speakers cutting across all barriers of gender, race, caste...

To new humanity!

*Manasi Pradhan, activist, guest speaker at  
A Call for a New Humanity event, Oct 29th*

I really think the power of art for healing the things that happen to women is a really powerful method.

*Natalia Wills, Pro Mujer*

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Paintings by WFI featured  
Afghan artist Zuhal Feraidon

# Presentation of 2020-2021 Research & Implementation Projects with the United Nations

**On June 10th**, the **United Nations Institute for Training and Research** (UNITAR) will host a virtual event with Women Forward International and other internationally recognized experts to present our ten student and client teams' work this year.



## The Vanguard

On June 10th, join The Vanguard, where the bridging of international affairs and the transformative power of Art is no longer an anomaly, but a norm, and a new humanity is no longer a dream but an awakening reality. Presenting our 2020-2021 projects, The Vanguard is a meeting of our global scholarly teams' and clients' minds, hearts, and the power of art to heal. In partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the event will feature internationally recognized artists and leading women from around the globe.

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I feel privileged that I was asked to advise one of these projects[...] [Women Forward International] put an unusual amount of effort into designing the projects, working with the students, and then arranging to bring the insights to a wider audience. I have rarely encountered people who were so adept and thoughtful about how to get the best out of projects like these, and what to do with the insights they generated.

*Professor Herman B. “Dutch” Leonard,  
Faculty Co-Director, Program on Crisis Leadership,  
John F. Kennedy School of Government,  
Harvard Business School*

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Women Forward's highly focused and professional work, including documentary research, expert interviews, and field research directly with women entrepreneurs, has provided us with invaluable insight into the reality of these women, their goals and the contribution they are seeking to make in the world. They have allowed us to understand the challenges and the limitations these women face, and to determine the most effective ways to empower them to overcome those challenges.

*Rocio Cavazos, The Ananda Group*

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## Ways to Support WFI

Partners like you make it possible for WFI to empower the next generation of leaders to dare to innovate through creative partnerships real solutions to our world's most pressing challenges. WFI offers a wide range of opportunities for you to invest in our mission to advance women to advance humanity:

### Philanthropic Support

- ☐ Individual Gifts
- ☐ Annual Gifts
- ☐ Corporate Sponsorships
- ☐ In-Kind Donations of Products or Services
- ☐ Planned Giving

For more information on the ways you can become a WFI philanthropic partner, please contact Dr. Kent Davis-Packard, President & Executive Director [kent@womenforwardinternational.org](mailto:kent@womenforwardinternational.org)

and Wesley Spencer, Director of Arts Partnerships & Strategic Development

[wesley@womenforwardinternational.org](mailto:wesley@womenforwardinternational.org)

### Connecting through Social Media

Please contact Dania Abdalla, Program Officer [daniala@womenforwardinternational.org](mailto:daniala@womenforwardinternational.org)

## Research and Project Implementation

We welcome university teams and organizational partners. If you have a partnership idea, please submit a letter of interest on our contact form on our [website](#). Please include your proposed project title in the subject box.

### Joining our Network

WFI's Counsel of Leopards welcomes experts and practitioners to serve as advisors to our scholarly teams. WFI's Arts Counsel invites artists to use their medium to engage our audiences in nuanced conversations essential to social and cultural transformation. Membership in both Counsels is by invitation. If you are interested in participating in either network, please contact us.

### Counsel of Leopards

Dania Abdalla, Program Officer  
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### Arts Counsel

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