

The world's first pioneering Gender-Smart Investing Summit launches in London

As latest figures reveal the movement of gender smart capital has grown exponentially since 2017, global thought leaders unite to tip the scales in the fight for equality.

Thursday 1st November 2018 --

Today marks the first ever Gender-Smart Investing Summit, where venture capitalists, asset managers, institutional investors, NGOs, and entrepreneurs from around the world will come together to examine how more capital can be channelled to accelerate positive change towards one of the most critical social issues of our time: achieving gender equality, globally.

The Gender-Smart Investing Summit is taking place in a week where 2018 data will be released from the [US Social Investment Forum](#), [Veris Wealth Partners](#), [Wharton Social Impact Initiative \(WSII\)](#), and [Catalyst at Large](#), each of which give a landscape analysis of investments being made in public and private markets globally.

WSII and Catalyst at Large scan private equity, venture, and debt funds in the second [“Project Sage” report](#), which revealed this week that the total capital raised has cleared \$2.2bn, up 73% from \$1.3bn in 2017. Project Sage 2.0 in 2018 identified 87 total funds deploying capital with a gender lens, up 50% from 58 in 2017. Geographic diversity is also increasing. Whilst North America remains the region of greatest targeted investment—with 40% of funds including North America as one of their targeted investment areas—this compares to approximately 80% in 2017.

Gender lens investing in publicly traded market strategies has also continued to grow strongly in the 12 months ending June 30 2018, rising 85% to a record \$2.4 billion, according to analysis by Veris Wealth Partners that was supported by Catalyst at Large. The number of explicit gender lens mandate strategies holding publicly traded securities has also continued to increase. In 2014, Veris identified eight investing vehicles. As of mid-year 2018, the number had more than quadrupled to 35. From a publicly listed side the product growth is mainly in Europe, the US and Canada; with notable activity in South Asia, India, Africa and with Australia taking the lead on gender bonds.

Two of the many initiatives announcing updates at the Summit include the G7 2X Challenge, the commitment from the G7 Development Finance Institutions to mobilise \$3 billion in capital by 2020 towards women; and The Billion Dollar Fund for Women (TBDF), a global consortium of blended finance partners committed to accelerating access to \$1 billion of funding and resources for women entrepreneurs over the next 10 years, globally.

The programme for the Gender-Smart Investing Summit has been designed to catapult the movement of capital to the next level globally. 300 invite-only participants from 43 countries, who have been carefully curated to ensure maximum impact, will take part in interactive sessions structured to maximise collaboration and develop new approaches to applying a gender lens to their investment efforts.

The Gender-Smart Investing Summit was co-founded by pioneering gender lens investor and market builder Suzanne Biegel, and UN advisor, impact investor, and best-selling author Darian Rodriguez Heyman, and is presented by Founding Partner, UBS.

Speaking in the lead up to The Summit, Co-Producer Suzanne Biegel comments:

“The time has definitely come for Gender-smart investing as an idea. The Summit will give us the opportunity to mobilise more capital across asset classes that is already making a hugely positive impact on advancing gender equality globally. We are so excited to be able to unite those who are moving significant capital strategically, and thought leaders with additional experience and insight to collaborate and share a commitment to action.

“We’re at a crucial tipping point. We need to make it easier for more investors to access financial vehicles and platforms with a gender lens. And we need to educate businesses on why it’s in their benefit to promote gender equality in their own business.

“Momentum is on our side. There is a groundswell growing from investors as well as demand from those seeking capital and new partnerships, and the opportunities are becoming more present. If we continue at this rate then we could see mass adoption within five years, moving from what has been seen as a niche to the mainstream. The opportunity is real, both for gender equality and for providing sound financial returns.”

In support of the Gender-Smart Investing Summit, Rachel Whittaker, Sustainable Investing Strategist at UBS Global Wealth Management's Chief Investment Office, adds:

"Gender-smart investing contributes to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5 of gender equality by channeling capital to organisations and projects that promote women’s empowerment. UBS is committed to supporting this goal as a key part of the unique sustainable and impact investments that we offer our clients.

This summit will also play an important role in furthering the goals of gender-smart investing by bringing together a diverse group of professionals who can drive real social and economic change."