

January 27, 2010



ExxonMobil, Ashoka's Changemakers and International Center for Research on Women Launch Women's Economic Development Challenge

- Women | Tools | Technology Challenge focuses on using technology and innovation to economically advance women in developing countries
- New study, Bridging the Gender Divide in Technology, provides research foundation for challenge
- Efforts are part of ExxonMobil's Women's Economic Opportunity Initiative, which has invested over \$30 million since 2005 launch

IRVING, Texas--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- [ExxonMobil](#), in partnership with [Ashoka's Changemakers](#) and the [International Center for Research on Women \(ICRW\)](#), today launched Women | Tools | Technology: Building Opportunities & Economic Power, an innovative challenge that will identify transformative solutions for promoting women's economic advancement through technology.

Through the Women | Tools | Technology Challenge, the partners are looking for creative ideas and sustainable approaches that enable more women from developing countries to be active contributors to and leaders in our rapidly changing economy.

"We hope that the ideas and solutions generated through Women | Tools | Technology will spark a profound transformation in the way women in developing countries live and work," said Lorie Jackson, director of [ExxonMobil's Women's Economic Opportunity Initiative](#).

"Technology has the potential to initiate a chain reaction that results in women's economic advancement and, in turn, raises their standard of living, contributes to significant global progress, and strengthens their families and communities."

The ideas and solutions generated through Women | Tools | Technology can be new or improve upon existing technologies to enable them to benefit more women. Innovators with concepts for catalyzing women's economic advancement through technology will be able to submit their ideas through a crowd-sourcing, online format that allows for discussion and collaboration among other innovators and select experts. Submissions will be accepted from January 27th through April 14th at <http://www.changemakers.com/en-us/technologywomen>.

Entries will be judged by a panel of experts, including Pam Darwin, ExxonMobil's vice president of Geoscience, Geeta Rao Gupta, president of ICRW, Andres Carlos Randazzo, Ashoka Fellow and founder of SANUT, Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, co-founder and executive director of the African Women's Development Fund and Christine Grumm, president and chief executive officer of the Women's Funding Network. Finalists will be announced in mid-

June.

"Women's economic advancement is often directly related to their ability to access and use technology," said Charlie Brown, executive director of Ashoka's Changemakers. "We're excited to work with some of the most creative innovators from around the world to develop ground-breaking solutions to leverage technology to live up to its promise of changing the world - the whole world - for the better."

Additional direction and focus for the challenge is provided by a new research study entitled, "Bridging the Gender Divide in Technology," which was conducted by ICRW and funded by the ExxonMobil Foundation. The white paper, which explores the link between technology and women's economic empowerment, is being released to coincide with the challenge launch and showcases existing technologies that help women increase their productivity, create new entrepreneurial ventures, and launch income-generating pursuits. The paper highlights what needs to be done to improve the way technologies are developed and deployed so they benefit women, enabling them to be more successful economic actors, stronger leaders, and greater contributors to their families, communities and domestic economies.

"When you consider the untapped potential of half the world's workforce, the combination of women, tools and technology can trigger truly transformative change," said Anju Malhotra, vice president for Research, Innovation and Impact at ICRW. "Our research offers social innovators practical recommendations on how to develop, introduce, and disseminate technologies that strengthen women's ability to compete in the global economy."

The Women | Tools | Technology Challenge is part of [ExxonMobil's Women's Economic Opportunity Initiative](#), and was [announced](#) at the Clinton Global Initiative's annual meeting in New York in September 2009. At the meeting, ExxonMobil co-sponsored the first-ever Clinton Global Initiative special programming focused on investing in girls and women.

The [Women's Economic Opportunity Initiative](#) (previously Educating Women and Girls Initiative) was launched in 2005 and has invested more than \$30 million in programs that have directly benefited thousands of women from 64 developing countries.

About ExxonMobil

[Exxon Mobil Corporation](#) (NYSE:XOM) and ExxonMobil Foundation, the primary philanthropic arm of Exxon Mobil Corporation in the United States, engage in a range of philanthropic activities that advance education, health, women's economic leadership and public policy in the communities where ExxonMobil has significant operations. In the United States, ExxonMobil supports initiatives to improve [math and science education](#) at the K-12 and higher education levels. Globally, ExxonMobil provides funding to help women fulfill their economic potential and [combat malaria](#) and other infectious diseases in developing countries. Additional information on ExxonMobil's community partnerships and contributions programs is available at www.exxonmobil.com/community.

About Ashoka and Ashoka's Changemakers

Ashoka is the global association of the world's leading social entrepreneurs - men and women with system-changing solutions for the world's most urgent social problems.

Ashoka's Changemakers creates opportunities for organizations and individuals to drive meaningful and measurable social change. Through collaborative competitions, Changemakers connects Ashoka's elite fellowship, an online community of social innovators, and pioneering investors to inspire and drive innovative solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. By focusing on how leading social entrepreneurs, government agencies, corporations, and citizens solve vital problems and build their communities, Changemakers and its partners spark promising ideas for further development and investment. Learn more at www.changemakers.com.

About the International Center for Research on Women

The International Center for Research on Women is a leading international research organization that works to empower women, advance gender equality and fight poverty in the developing world. To accomplish this, the International Center for Research on Women works with partners in the public and private sectors and civil society to conduct empirical research, build capacity and advocate for evidence-based practical ways to change policies and programs. Learn more about the International Center for Research on Women and its work at www.icrw.org.

Photos/Multimedia Gallery Available: <http://www.businesswire.com/cgi-bin/mmg.cgi?eid=6156741&lang=en>

Source: Exxon Mobil Corporation