



Stanford eCorner

The Story of Global Fund for Women

Kavita Ramdas, *Global Fund for Women*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/217/The-Story-of-Global-Fund-for-Women>

Kavita Ramdas, President and CEO of the Global Fund for Women talks about the organization as a classic Silicon Valley story taking birth in a kitchen in 1987. The organization provides seed and strengthening capital for social entrepreneurs who are working for change.



Transcript

At the Global Fund for Women, we are very lucky to be able to provide seed capital and strengthening capital to social entrepreneurs who are taking the kinds of risks that are truly quite extraordinary in being able to try and make change within their own societies. In many ways, we are a classic Silicon Valley startup story. The Global Fund for Women was started in 1987 in a kitchen in Palo Alto; three women who decided that there was simply not sufficient resources accessible to the organizations that were taking some of the most innovative and creative steps for social change in much of the developing world, namely women's organizations. Anne Firth Murray had been a program officer at the Hewlett Foundation. She quit her job and together with Frances Kisling and Laura Lederer had the hutzpa, a good word today on Passover, to think that they could actually get money directly into the hands of social entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs in countries all around the world and make that capital immediately available to them with a minimum of bureaucratic intervention. Most large foundations that worked international, private philanthropy that worked internationally felt that you had to kind of invest in the large institutions. Even traditional development thinking was all about large institutions. The World Bank was busy building dams. People were thinking big scale about universities. Nobody was thinking about what \$3,000 or \$4,000 could do in a place where there was insufficient healthcare or where women had no access to microcredit or to capital to be able to start businesses.

I think that was what really distinguished the Global Fund for Women when it first began.