

Walmart Empowers Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

Walmart's Global Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative is an effort with specific goals to open markets for women-owned businesses, and increase training and career opportunities for women on farms and in factories. Working toward those goals, on April 13, 2012 at the Sixth Summit of the Americas in Cartagena, Colombia, Walmart announced its support of two innovative initiatives aimed at empowering underserved women in Latin America and the Caribbean:

- Walmart is partnering with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's [WEAmericas Small Grants Initiative](#), which will provide up to 55,000 women in Latin America and the Caribbean with tools to build a business and take control of their futures.
- Separately, Walmart and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) will be working to provide job training and placement for nearly 1 million young people in these regions through the [New Employment Opportunities \(NEO\)](#) initiative.

Women-owned businesses in Latin America face numerous barriers that impede their growth and success, including a lack of training, access to the marketplace and business networks. While there are some existing programs that aim to improve women's economic participation, few initiatives focus on women-owned small and medium-sized businesses. Walmart and Secretary Clinton are working to change that through the WEAmericas Small Grants Initiative.

[WEAmericas Small Grants Initiative:](#)

- The Walmart Foundation has awarded a \$1.5 million grant to Secretary Clinton's International Fund for Women and Girls to create the WEAmericas Small Grants Initiative.
- The funding will be used to issue small grants in support of women entrepreneurship in rural and indigenous communities throughout the Americas, offering skills training, business networking and access to markets. The effort is expected to reach up to 55,000 women over the next two years.

[Skills Training and Business Networks](#)

- In addition to the grant initiative, approximately 100 women from Latin America and the Caribbean will be selected to travel to the United States to participate in the annual State Department International Visitors Leadership Program where they will form support networks, business relationships and participate in strategic planning and other relevant workshops.
- In an effort to ensure the participants' long-term stability, in-depth follow-up and training will be led by [Vital Voices](#). The support is being funded by a \$500,000 Walmart Foundation grant. Vital Voices provides training and mentoring to women leaders.

[Access to Markets](#)

- Walmart will also work with [WEConnect International](#) to help open markets for women-owned business in the Americas and will help connect potential suppliers to Walmart buyers.

At a time when employers in Latin America and the Caribbean are struggling to find qualified workers, 20 percent of young people in the region are unemployed. Many lack education and job skills, and face challenges in finding low-cost, effective job training. In an effort to change this, Walmart is supporting the New Employment Opportunities initiative.

The New Employment Opportunities (NEO) Initiative:

- The New Employment Opportunities (NEO) initiative will provide job training and placement for approximately 1 million youth in Latin American and the Caribbean by 2022. **Half of those reached will be female.**
- As part of its commitment to the NEO initiative, Walmart will translate and provide its Walmart Brazil Social Retail School curriculum to the IDB's NEO Initiative. The retailer also committed to continuing its partnership in Brazil with governments and NGOs for the next five years, graduating thousands of new students. Combined, **this support is valued at more than \$10 million.**
- The NEO Initiative is led by the [Multilateral Investment Fund \(MIF\)](#) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the [International Youth Foundation \(IYF\)](#), along with the support of other leading corporations.
- Walmart anticipates hiring up to 200,000 associates in Latin America for entry-level positions over the next five years.

Additional details about these initiatives, their supporting partners and Walmart's Global Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative can be found at www.walmartstores.com/women.

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