



Invest It: Impact Investing Track

Speakers

- Elizabeth Schott, CEO, Accion
- Catherine Berman, Co-founder & CEO, CNote
- Shreya Shah Sasaki, Chief Operating Officer, Mission Driven Finance

Notes from Session

- CNote is an investment platform that helps foundations and organizations transition into and dig deeper into impact investing.
- Accion is a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). It has been around for 25 years and has almost 100,000 clients. Their repayment rates are and their post small loan business survival rates are around 95%. 40-45% of their clients are women and those who see increased barriers in access to capital. Accion has ten sources of capital, including government, family foundations, and quasi-governmental organizations. Their pipeline of small business saving loans is slowly and steadily growing.
- The Wisdom Fund is a collaboration of CDFIs who came together to solve access to capital and wealth for women. They determined that there is an investment opportunity and used human centered design to launch the fund. This fund provides a 5 year fixed income note.
- Only 1 in 23 lending dollars go to women. There is an increase in women seeking funds but lenders aren't meeting the need.
- Philanthropy can help through the technical assistance funds and the first loss reserve fund.
- The Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego is trying to make it as easy as possible for philanthropic organizations to explore impact investing through the Women Empowerment Loan Fund (WELF).
 - WELF is a loan fund that will provide low-cost loans for underrepresented women business owners in San Diego. It blends philanthropic funds and low-cost capital and fills the gap for grassroots entrepreneurs that don't have access to resources at Accion or CDC.
- There needs to be a linkage to nonprofits so they know the resources are out there to help women in need. To do this, there needs to be collective education available for nonprofits to access this knowledge and the ecosystem. Also create a matrix of alternative lending services in San Diego.
- [Invest for Better](#) is a campaign that shares stories of women in the impact investing journey and creates investing circles, similar to giving circles.
- What do we need to keep this moving? Awareness, operating and programmatic grants, capital for loan loss reserves. Connect program officers with investment side to create specific programs.