



Forsythia "Northern Gold" in bloom in May. Photo courtesy of D. Ceplis.

The Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) Digest provides a compilation of information and articles gathered on an ongoing basis on gender equality mainstreaming within agriculture, scientific research, rural development, climate change, organizational development and international development. Information is shared with members, colleagues, scientific societies and diverse organizations.

The views and opinions presented are not necessarily representative of the editor.

If you have information to share, please send it to dinah.ceplis@gmail.com to compile and re-distribute once a month.

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Opportunities and Coming Events

1. Fund for Innovation and Transformation -Call for Proposals Round 6

<https://www.fit-fit.ca/application-process/overview>

If you're a Canadian small and medium-sized organization (SMO) who wants to test an innovative solution to advance gender equality, you might qualify. The program is open to civil society organizations, social enterprises, post-secondary institutions and the private sector. Successful applicants will be provided between \$150K-175K CAD over a 6-10 month testing and reporting period.

Wednesday, June 12th, 2024, 1 p.m. CT is the deadline for submitting your Concept Note application to FIT.

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2. Nuffield Canada Agricultural Scholarships

<https://www.nuffield.ca/>

Applications for 2025 Nuffield Canada Agricultural Scholarships are open now through June 30. The Nuffield Scholarship is a prestigious rural leadership program available to Canadian citizens who are involved in any aspect of agriculture. Its goal is to attract mid-career applicants with a passion for agriculture who are ready to challenge themselves in a program of self-directed international travel and study.

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3. Volunteer as a Catalyste+ Advisor

<https://www.catalysteplus.org/volunteer-with-us/>

Catalyste+ Advisors are Canadian senior-level professionals with extensive expertise from both the private and public sectors. Leveraging an average of 20 years of experience, Advisors provide mentorship and advisory services to Catalyste+ partners and clients through a sequence of short-term, strategic assignments.

While some assignments take place in-country, Catalyste+ is proud to offer virtual mentorship to 30+ countries.

We recently launched a new microsite: Our Impact in The North. This highlights the work of Indigenous-led non-profit organizations, governments, economic development corporations and micro, small and medium enterprises; and our commitment to growing local capacity and strengthening business networks. Since the early 2000s, Catalyste+ has worked alongside Indigenous communities in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut

This Month's News

1. Film series focuses on ag diversity

<https://www.producer.com/farmliving/film-series-focuses-on-ag-diversity/>

Rachelle Ternier talks about how she has taken over operating Prairie Garden Seeds from her father, who still helps as much as he can. Together they process and package more than 800 varieties of seeds for sale through their website, printed catalogue and at Seedy Saturday events throughout the province.

Her own story is one of approaching farming from a feminist perspective and making more intentional decisions focused on a healthy environment for her farm. She thinks about what she's taking out just as much as what she's putting in, she said.

Ternier is one of nearly 80,000 women who play a lead role in farm operations across the country, which according to Statistics Canada is 30.4 percent of all Canadian farm operators.

Rebecca MacInnis, who owns and operates Spring Tide Farms with her sister, Jessie, in Lapland, N.S., said telling stories of farming and food is incredibly important, but the narrative shouldn't always be about a white man on a tractor. It's important to shine a light on women, people of colour and LGBTQ+ people who are also making their own way within the agriculture industry.

MacInnis has had a lot of female mentors and has learned from many Indigenous seed stewards, land stewards and racialized people who have led the way for her as a white woman to own land. That deserves to be celebrated, she said.

The NFU is releasing its Depth of Field video project on YouTube with 40 videos produced to tell the story of Canadian farmers.

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2. Why are women still underrepresented in non-profit leadership?

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-why-are-women-still-underrepresented-in-non-profit-leadership/>

Despite the fact that women make up 85 per cent of non-profit support staff in Canada, they hold only 70 per cent of senior executive positions. In some cases, the makeup of the board of directors can also be an issue for moving women up the pipeline, because they make the decisions about who will be hired for leadership positions. Studies have shown that boards with women on them tend to hire more women.

Changing board makeup, though, requires progressive leaders who are willing to recruit members "who don't look like board members who have historically been on non-profit boards of directors," Kimberly Carson adds. That means recruiting people who are women, racialized, LGBTQ+, living with disabilities and more. She points to studies that have repeatedly shown that increasing diversity on boards boosts the bottom line.

On Reddit message boards, women leaders say that although they spent their careers in non-profits because they were passionate about the causes, they became ground down after years working long hours for less pay than they would make in for-profit companies.

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3. Ghana Law Tests World Bank Loyalty With \$20 Billion on The Line

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-05-08/ghana-s-feud-over-anti-lgbtq-law-threatens-20-billion-debt-deal>

Ghana's Supreme Court will start hearing a case that has the potential to both threaten the West African country's \$20 billion debt restructuring and test the World Bank's commitment to support LGBTQ rights.

The court is being asked to strike down legislation that would jail those who identify as LGBTQ and punish others — family members, co-workers, teachers — if they fail to inform on them to the authorities. If the court rejects the appeal, the World Bank will face a dilemma: should it continue to support the anti-poverty fight in Ghana or defend liberal values.

It's a decision that's likely to reverberate way beyond Ghana's borders, setting a precedent for how the Bank handles the erosion of LGBTQ and other human rights globally.

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4. World Bank and IMF can press Ghana to rethink 'punitive' LGBTQ law, charities say

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/article/2024/may/11/world-bank-and-imf-can-press-ghana-to-rethink-punitive-lgbtq-law-charities-say>

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are coming under pressure to use their financial might to persuade Ghana to reconsider a proposed law that could lead to anyone who identifies as LGBTQ+ being jailed for three years.

Charities and campaign groups are calling on the global development bodies to tell Ghana they may stop funding the country if the proposed legislation – which will be challenged in the country's supreme court next week – comes into effect.

Ghana's finance ministry has warned that if the law comes into effect it could lead to the country losing \$3.8bn in World Bank financing over the next five to six years. Losing that funding, the ministry said, could "derail" a \$3bn bailout programme from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and its efforts to restructure its \$20bn debt pile.

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5. Civil Society Scores LGBTQI+ Rights Victory in Dominica

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2024/05/civil-society-scores-lgbtqi-rights-victory-dominica/>

On 22 April, Dominica's High Court struck down two sections of the country's Sexual Offences Act that criminalised consensual same-sex relations, finding them unconstitutional. This made Dominica the sixth country in the Commonwealth Caribbean – and the fourth in the Eastern Caribbean – to decriminalise same-sex relations through the courts, and the first in 2024.

Similar decisions were made in Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitts and Nevis and Barbados in 2022 – but progress then threatened to stall. Change in Dominica revives the hopes of LGBTQI+ activists in the five remaining English-speaking Caribbean states – Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines – that still criminalise same-sex relations.

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6. Climate scientists wary of starting families

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/article/2024/may/10/climate-scientists-starting-families-children>

An exclusive Guardian survey has found that almost a fifth of the female climate experts who responded have chosen to have no children, or fewer children, due to the environmental crises afflicting the world. Such decisions were extremely difficult, they said.

The Guardian approached every contactable lead author or review editor of all reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change since 2018. The IPCC's reports are the gold standard of climate knowledge. Of the 843 contacted, 360 replied to the question on life decisions, a high response rate.

Ninety-seven female scientists responded, with 17, including women from Brazil, Chile, Germany, India and Kenya, saying they had chosen to have fewer children. All but 1% of the scientists surveyed were over 40 years old and two-thirds were

over 50, reflecting the senior positions they had reached in their professions. A quarter of the respondents were women, the same proportion as the overall authorship of the IPCC reports.

The findings were in response to a question about major personal decisions taken in response to the climate crisis by scientists who know the most about it, and who expect global temperatures to soar past international targets in coming years. 7% of the male scientists who responded said they had had either no children or fewer than they would otherwise have had.

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7. Women Affected by ‘Gender-Biased’ Climate Change Deserve Justice

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2024/04/women-affected-by-gender-biased-climate-change-deserve-justice/>

While research into the unequal impacts of climate change on women is growing, more is needed to enable them to realize their rights to climate justice.

Researchers argue that women and girls have unequal access to food, water, health, education, and even income, thanks to climate change. This makes them more vulnerable.

A new report from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has found that climate change has a disproportionate impact on the incomes of rural women, people living in poverty, and older populations. The report analyzed data from over 100,000 rural households across 24 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). It found that women’s capacity to respond and adapt to extreme weather events is unequal to that of men.

The Unjust Climate report highlights that in LMICs, female heads of households in rural areas suffer significantly greater financial losses annually than men.

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8. UN seeks \$430 million for drought-hit Zimbabwe, saying millions of people need food and water

<https://apnews.com/article/drought-appeal-el-nino-girls-abuse-2c787ba4dbe248724a719aba4cf35089>

About half of Zimbabwe’s population urgently needs food and water after the country’s worst drought in four decades, the U.N. humanitarian agency said Thursday as it launched an appeal for \$430 million to help those most in need.

About 7.6 million of the country’s 15 million people need “lifesaving and life-sustaining” humanitarian assistance, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said.

A drought induced by the El Nino weather phenomenon is sweeping across much of southern Africa and has left both people and animals in desperate need of food and water. Zimbabwe, an agriculture reliant nation and one time exporter of food, is among the hardest hit by the drought.

Children under the age 5 and pregnant and breastfeeding women are more vulnerable, while the risk of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse are heightening as a result of the drought, according to the appeal document.

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9. Women are fighting climate change in the south Pacific, but need money

<https://devex.shorthandstories.com/women-vanuatu-fight-climate-change-need-funds/index.html>

Investing in local women-led climate initiatives is likely to yield gains not only in global goals on climate but also in gender equality. Research by the U.N. Office for Disaster Risk Reduction shows that having Pacific women in disaster leadership roles challenges mindsets around the traditional role of women.

In Vanuatu, traditional roles are still the norm. As it stands, communities remain governed by male chiefs, traditional *kastom* practices prevent women from inheriting land, and 60% of women who have been in a relationship have experienced gender-based violence. Earlier this year, Amnesty International said the country was a leader on climate but lagging on gender.

The Women I TokTok Tugeta, or WITTT, network, created by ActionAid and Vanuatu’s Department of Women’s Affairs following Cyclone Pam, has engaged over 9,000 women across five islands in local climate action while also addressing discrimination and gender-based violence. The forum follows a train-the-trainer model, with local staff educating women, like Epao village’s Kaltong, from different areas on how to better prepare for and respond to cyclones, droughts, and floods.

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10. How tech and tradition are cyclone-proofing Vanuatu's food systems

<https://www.devex.com/news/how-tech-and-tradition-are-cyclone-proofing-vanuatu-s-food-systems-107542>

As natural disasters increase threefold, the Vanuatu government, supported by NGOs, is taking action to protect the food it produces and cyclone-proof its food systems. And while many of these efforts involve new technology, they’re also tapping into food preservation techniques that were once popular among the Indigenous ni-Vanuatu people but have since withered in the face of modernization.

This might include intercropping, chemical-free agriculture, or indigenous food preservation techniques.

For example, prior to European colonization in the Pacific in the 1800s, it was common to preserve breadfruit, harvested from trees native only to tropical regions of the world, by burying them in underground pits for over 12 months. And islanders on Futuna in the Tafea province of Vanuatu have maintained the “mara technique,” which allows bananas to be kept for over two years once drained, buried, and mixed with coconut.

Last June, Save the Children launched a pilot project with a 16-household community on the island of Nguna. They took the idea of dehydrating fruits and vegetables and supplemented it with solar dryers while exploring the dehydration of nuts and other vegetables. Any excess crops cultivated by the community are sent to local food supplier Fine Foods, which packages the vegetables and meat into ready-meal ration packs that can be stockpiled for post-disaster use.

In 2021, backed by the country’s Department of Agriculture, scientists rolled out a “golden yam,” modified to grow at a faster rate and be resilient to climate shocks, pests, and diseases.

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11. At international energy conference, delegates push to make clean cooking accessible to all

<https://apnews.com/article/iea-energy-efficiency-conference-clean-cooking-6a0b586eb4a849fdc639514fb6cf50f4>

The Paris-based International Energy Agency’s 9th annual conference on energy efficiency brings together ministers, CEOs and thought leaders from around the world to discuss how to speed up progress on energy efficiency, which experts say can drastically reduce planet-warming emissions. On the agenda is how to deliver affordable clean cooking, which involves using electricity, solar and other solutions instead of more polluting fuels like charcoal, wood and kerosene.

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12. The 2024 Women in Ag Award winners

<https://afsc.ca/news/the-2024-women-in-ag-award-winners/>

From championing agriculture to bringing communities together, from finding innovative solutions to showing leadership and mentorship – this year’s Women in Ag Award recipients are breaking down barriers, setting new expectations and bringing fresh ideas and practices to the agriculture industry.

The 2024 Women in Ag Awards were presented during The Notables, a special reception on March 17 in Calgary. The Notables was held in conjunction with the 2024 Advance Women in Agriculture West Conference.

13. Iris Meck - A Lifetime of Agricultural Leadership

<https://www.smallfarmcanada.ca/news/iris-meck-a-lifetime-of-agricultural-leadership/>

Iris Meck was honored with The Notable Lifetime Achiever Award at the 2024 Women in Ag Awards, held during the Advancing Women in Ag Conference in mid-March. Recognized during The Notables reception in Calgary, Iris's journey from her roots on a family farm in Manitoba to becoming a trailblazer for women in agribusiness underscores her resilience, determination, and dedication.

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Reports, Publications, Resources

1. Young changemakers revolutionise scaling agroecology using video

<https://www.accessagriculture.org/news/young-changemakers-revolutionise-scaling-agroecology-using-video>

Access Agriculture is proud to announce the release of its new book “Young changemakers,” which offers a rich diversity of perspectives and insights from real-life experiences of 42 inspiring teams of youths in Africa and India who are blazing a trail as private extension and advisory service providers promoting agroecology through farmer-to-farmer learning videos.

Each of the deeply compelling stories presented in this book sparks new ideas on how young people can drive change and create sustainable jobs that contribute to more resilient food systems.

A free e-version of the book can be downloaded on the Access Agriculture website: www.accessagriculture.org/our-young-entrepreneurs.

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2. Contextualized Portrait for Prevention, Awareness and Action on Gender-based and Sexual Violence in Canadian International Cooperation

<https://digna.ca/>

The Canadian Centre of Expertise on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (Digna) has commissioned a new study to better understand sexual and gender-based violence in the professional context of Canadian international cooperation.

The results of the research project, led by Université Laval professor Isabelle Auclair, underscore the need to work together to combat sexual and gender-based violence in international cooperation, focusing on ongoing research and policy development for safer working environments. English version available soon.

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3. Shifting Power in International Cooperation

<https://cooperation.ca/shifting-power-in-international-cooperation-connecting-the-dots-for-cooperation-canadas-members/>

Cooperation Canada launched *Shifting Power in International Cooperation*, a report that defines the key terms and arguments related to shifting power in international cooperation, describes the transformations underway in the Global North and the Global South, and outlines what Canadian actors, among others, are doing to advance the power shift agenda.

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4. The Agri Revolution: Our Investment in a Kenyan Startup's Bold Quest to Overhaul Food Waste

<https://youtu.be/6LKJ2fw6mxQ>

A Catalyst Fund portfolio company in Kenya, Farm to Feed is a digitally-enabled platform focused on reducing food loss and waste, in turn reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing farmer incomes, and making nutritious food affordable to consumers. They do this by aggregating imperfect, rescue, and surplus produce from a network of thousands of smallholder farmers across Kenya and distributing it B2B to customers such as feeding programs, retail markets, and food processors at affordable prices. They are also currently in the process of unlocking carbon credits as an additional revenue stream. It is a women-led company.

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5. Women in agriculture are coming together to talk about the future of farming - Newfoundland and Labrador

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.4221101>

Farmers, researchers and producers in Newfoundland and Labrador are sharing ideas, championing wins and trying to overcome the obstacles that accompany being a woman in the agricultural industry. The CBC's Jeremy Eaton drops by Day 1 of the three-day event to hear what's on the mind of some longtime farmers.

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6. Manifesto for a thriving world: IIED's connected ambition, 2024 and beyond

<https://iied.org/manifesto-for-thriving-world>

As a globally recognised force for climate and social justice, IIED has been building a fairer, more sustainable world for more than 50 years. But it's time for a fresh take on sustainability as it has come to be understood, offering different answers and approaches to address the world's entrenched climate, nature and inequality crises.

Many aspects of what we have been doing in the sector for half a century are no longer as relevant or helpful as they once were and are not achieving the breakthroughs we desperately need. Equally, the certainty of a static, five-year strategy has been lost to a new era of compounding crises, deep injustices and increasing unpredictability.

Following a year of review and dialogue, this manifesto presents our refreshed approach to impact. In doing so, we acknowledge achieving our mission means we cannot continue doing more of the same and instead must challenge ourselves to take a bold new direction while retaining the best of what makes IIED unique.

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7. Backgrounder: Race and Gender in the Workplace

<https://womanact.ca/publications/backgrounder-race-and-gender-in-the-workplace/>

Indigenous, Black and Racialized women face unique, intersecting, and compounding forms of gender and racial discrimination that impact their employment opportunities and experiences in the workplace.

This brief provides an overview of the structural and individual dimensions of gender and racial discrimination and how this intersection impacts the opportunities and experiences of Indigenous, Black, and Racialized women in Canadian workplaces. Additionally, it spotlights the intersection of gender-based violence in the workplace.

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8. The unjust climate: Measuring the impacts of climate change on rural poor, women and youth

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/20d564b5-2842-4230-b81a-4c7b0179e320>

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc9680en>

Synopsis (short abstract)

Developing policies to foster inclusive rural transformation processes requires better evidence on how climate change is affecting the livelihoods and economic behaviours of vulnerable rural people, including women, youths and people living in poverty. In particular, there is little comparative, multi-country and multi-region evidence to understand how exposure to weather shocks and climate change affects the drivers of rural transformation and adaptive actions across different segments of rural societies and in different agro-ecological contexts. This evidence is essential because, while climate risk and adaptive actions are context specific and require local solutions, global evidence is important for identifying shared vulnerabilities and priority actions for scaling up effective responses. This report assembles an impressive set of data from 24 low- and middle-income countries in five world regions to measure the effects of climate change on rural women, youths and people living in poverty. It analyses socioeconomic data collected from 109 341 rural households (representing over 950 million rural people) in these 24 countries. These data are combined in both space and time with 70 years of georeferenced data on daily precipitation and temperatures. The data enable us to disentangle how different types of climate stressors affect people's on-farm, off-farm and total incomes, labour allocations and adaptive actions, depending on their wealth, gender and age characteristics.

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9. AICCRA Annual Report 2023

<https://aiccra.cgiar.org/aiccra-annual-report-2023>

In 2023, women have continued to be active agents in the scaling of climate-smart technologies and information services through AICCRA activities. Of the 4 million individuals we reached this year, 1.6 million were women.

We recognize the crucial role women play as climate-smart champions in their communities. Through training for women's groups and women-led, community-based organizations, the inclusion of female service providers and extension agents in dissemination, and using accelerator programs as scaling mechanisms to support women-led SMEs, 35 CIS and CSA technologies have reached women in our focus areas.

To share learnings from our activities with others in Africa's agricultural sector, AICCRA's Gender and Social Inclusion (GSI) cluster conducted a series of webinars on gender. We also provided training on gender and climate hotspot mapping, training with the World Bank's Food Systems Resilience Program (FSRP), and held a workshop on women's leadership in agriculture and climate research with CORAF.

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10. Research: This is what a feminist response to crisis looks like

<https://equalityfund.ca/grantmaking/new-research-this-is-what-a-feminist-response-to-crisis-looks-like/>

What if the world understood crises through the lens of feminist leaders who respond to them every day?

This question guided us as we gathered more than 100 activists, government leaders, and feminist funders for a rich day of dialogues, prompted by our new research on feminist responses to crises. Set amid the busy backdrop of the 68th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the topic was especially timely.

But whose crises? How is “crisis” itself understood, defined, and prioritized, and by whom? How does a feminist lens disrupt the usual answers to these questions to reveal a more powerful, more political, and more transformative response?

The report includes an overview of eight strategies used by feminist crisis responders and four recommendations for government and institutional funders to collaborate more effectively with them.

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11. A New Report Highlights the Impact of Off-Grid Energy Solutions — And Some Emerging Challenges

<https://nextbillion.net/empowering-the-underserved-new-report-impact-off-grid-energy-solutions-emerging-challenges/>

As it currently stands, the world is not on track to achieve universal electricity access by 2030: 660-674 million people living in the most rural and impoverished communities are expected to remain unelectrified. Off-grid energy products can support these hardest-to-reach communities, offering not just light and electricity, but pathways to financial empowerment and resilience. Ensuring that off-grid energy businesses and organizations have the right support to successfully scale to reach these populations will be key to closing the electrification gap.

At 60 Decibels, we have found that the off-grid energy sector is making a material difference for hundreds of millions of people around the globe. And based on our interviews with 79,000 energy customers in over 30 different countries in the last three years, we’ve learned that the off-grid sector — with some adjustments — could reach hundreds of millions more when scaled further.

LOCALLY-OWNED AND/OR WOMEN-LED ENTERPRISES ARE IMPACT ALL-STARS

When assessing the landscape of companies and organizations offering off-grid energy products, we unearthed some pretty compelling insights. Locally-owned organizations emerged as standout performers, with higher levels of social impact, broader female reach, greater representation of lower-income customers, and superior ratings in terms of ease of use and customer satisfaction. This suggests a deep understanding of the challenges faced by these populations.

Similarly, women-led organizations also showcased impressive results, demonstrating heightened impact and outreach among female populations, along with lower consumer over-indebtedness rates, and lower rates of the usage challenges discussed above.

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