

15 Inspiring Women CEOs That Impacted The World In 2015



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Here is a list of 15 inspiring women CEOs that impacted the world in 2015. These CEOs run companies/organizations that are developing their business/organizations to solve or prevent some of our world's most pressing issues.

As technology and globalization continue to become a part of all of our eco-systems, we all begin to share each other's path. We now have amazing data on poverty, malnutrition, disease, climate, agriculture, and so much more. With this data we can now see solutions being solved through business and through dedicated organizations. Non-profit organizations are changing, traditional business models are changing, and more and more the business and non-profit world are working together to solve issues, test products, and create new innovative solutions.

Check out the list below and see how these inspiring women CEO's from all walks of life are doing incredible things through technology, manufacturing, finance, design, business, and communications.

Jessica O. Matthews—Uncharted Play



Jessica is the Co-Founder & CEO of **Uncharted Play**, which is a for-profit social enterprise dedicated to improving lives through play. Their flagship product is the SOCKET, an energy harnessing soccer ball. She has over seven years of start-up and small business experience in the software and technology industry. She is the recipient of the Millennium Challenge Corporation Next Generation Award (2013), Named as one of Black Enterprise’s “40 Under 40 Next Generation of Women in Power” (2012), Named Scientist of the Year by the Harvard Foundation (2012), one of the “10 Most Powerful Women Entrepreneurs” by Fortune (2011), and Next Generation Breakthrough Innovator by Popular Mechanics (2010). Invited by President Barack Obama to the White House to represent small companies for the signing of the America Invents Act. Education: MBA from Harvard Business School (2014); BA in Psychology & Economics, Harvard College (2010).

Patricia Foley Hinnen – Capital Sisters International



Patricia Foley Hinnen is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of **Capital Sisters International**. Since establishing Capital Sisters, she has raised loan capital from donations and bond sales to finance tens of thousands of women’s micro businesses in 23 developing countries, and served as a microfinance advisor to the State Department where she represented the U.S. in the 21-nation Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) for a decade after 9/11 as head of the Women Leaders Network. Within the U.S., Patricia is the Co-founder of Colorado Microcredit, the Micro

Business Development Center, and the Colorado Microfinance Alliance and is an Advisor to the Rocky Mountain Microfinance Institute. She also serves on the boards of the International Fund of the Colorado Women’s Foundation and the Colorado Alliance of Professional Women. Patricia developed a passion for international affairs early in her career after serving in the Peace Corps in West and Southern Africa.

Lauren Bush Lauren—FEED



Lauren Bush Lauren is the Founder and CEO of FEED, a social business whose mission is to “Create Good Products That Help FEED the World.” In 2004, Lauren became the Honorary Student Spokesperson for the UN World Food Programme. During this time, she traveled to various countries and learned about the issues of hunger and poverty. Lauren was inspired to create a consumer product that would engage more people in the seemingly overwhelming fight to end world

hunger. In 2005, she envisioned the idea for FEED by designing the initial FEED 1 bag which, when purchased, feeds one child in school for one year. In 2007, FEED was founded. Every product sold has a measurable donation attached to it. FEED has been able to donate over \$6 million and provide nearly 60 million school meals globally through the United Nations World Food Programme and Feeding America. FEED has also supported nutrition programs around the world, providing vitamin supplements to over 3.5 million children through UNICEF.

Avery Bang – Bridges to Prosperity



Avery is the CEO of Bridges to Prosperity. They provide isolated communities with access to essential health care, education and economic opportunities **by building footbridges over impassable rivers**. The mission is to attain long lasting impact through bridge projects that reduce rural poverty due to isolation. Avery was named on one Engineering News Record’s Top 25 Newsmakers of 2012, and was selected to ENR Mountain Region’s Top 20 Under 40 list in

2013. In 2011, she selected as one of American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) New Faces, recognizing the top ten Civil Engineers under 30. Avery currently teaches Cable Supported Pedestrian Bridge Design at the University of Colorado in the MC-EDC. She also serves on the University of Iowa College of Engineering Department of Civil Engineering Advisory Board as well as the College of Liberal Arts Young Advisory Board.

Jacqueline Novogratz—Acumen



Prior to [Acumen](#), Jacqueline founded and directed The Philanthropy Workshop and The Next Generation Leadership programs at the [Rockefeller Foundation](#). She also co-founded [Duterimbere](#), a micro-finance institution in Rwanda. She began her career in international banking with Chase Manhattan Bank. Jacqueline currently sits on the advisory boards of Sonen Capital and the [Harvard Business School Social Enterprise Initiative](#). She serves on the Aspen Institute Board of Trustees and the board of [IDEO.org](#), and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council for Sustainable Development.

Emily Núñez Cavness – Sword & Plough



Emily is the CEO and Co-Founder of Sword & Plough. Emily is also an active duty U.S. Army officer. Inspired by her time and experiences at the U.S. Army Airborne School and childhood growing up in a military family, Emily and her sister Betsy co-founded Sword & Plough in 2012. As a [Dell](#) Social Innovation Fellow, Emily gained key insight to grow and sustain Sword & Plough's three core areas of impact. Emily is the major liaison between the veteran sewers,

veteran charities, and communicator of S&P's mission. Emily leads the S&P team and oversees advocacy projects, veteran relations, and key brand relationships. She holds a B.A. in International Studies from Middlebury College.

Barbara Bush—Global Health Corps



Barbara Bush is CEO and co-founder of Global Health Corps. GHC has deployed 322 fellows from 24 citizenships to work in 7 countries, since 2009. She has traveled with the UN World Food Programme, focusing on the importance of nutrition in ARV treatment. Barbara is a member of UNICEF's Next Generation Steering Committee and the UN Foundation's Global Entrepreneurs Council and is one of the World Economic Forum's Young Global Shapers.

(Image Credit: Adam Bettcher/Getty Images)

Rachael Chong—Catchafire



Rachael Chong is the Founder and CEO of Catchafire, a platform that connects professionals with nonprofits on projects that create positive social impact. Catchafire has become the world's largest online skills-based volunteer marketplace. In 2012, Rachael was named Fast Company's Most 100 Creative People in Business and received the NYC Venture Fellowship and the Tribeca Disruptive Innovation Award.

Ajaita Shah – Frontier Markets



Ajaita is the Founder and CEO of Frontier Markets and President of Frontier Innovations Foundation. Frontier Markets responds to the market failure to provide rural BOP villagers in India with access, training, and servicing for clean-energy products. Ajaita

has been a 2006 Clinton Service Corp Fellow, 2012 Echoing Green Fellow, and the 2014 Cordes Fellow. She was named to Business Week's 30 under 30 Award, and most recently, Forbes Magazine's Top 30 Under 30's Social Entrepreneur of the Year and Women Entrepreneur of the Year 2015. She is also an active member of the UN Practitioner's Network, Asian Development Bank's Energy For All Partnership. She holds a B.A. in International Relations from Tufts University.

Photo: Decoller VitC

Kathy Calvin – United Nations Foundation



Kathy Calvin is the CEO of the United Nations Foundation. The UN Foundation was created in 1998 with entrepreneur and philanthropist Ted Turner's historic \$1 billion gift to support UN causes and activities. The UN Foundation's

work is focused on decreasing child mortality, empowering women and girls, creating a clean energy future, protecting diverse cultures and environments, using mobile technology for development, and improving U.S.-UN relations. Kathy's career has spanned the public, private and nonprofit sectors for many years. Before joining the UN Foundation as Chief Operating Officer in 2003, she served as President of the AOL Time Warner Foundation. She previously served in senior positions at AOL, Hill and Knowlton, and U.S. News & World Report. From 1976 through 1984 she was Senator Gary Hart's press secretary.

Cynthia Koenig – Wello



earned MBA/MS degrees from the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business and School of Natural Resources & Environment and holds a BA in Anthropology from Trinity College.

Cynthia Koenig with a WaterWheel Credit: Josh Dick

Jensine (Yen-See Nah) Larsen—World Pulse



Jensine Larsen is an award-winning social media entrepreneur and international journalist and speaker. At age 28 she founded **World Pulse** - an action media network powered by women. Today 50,000 women from 190 countries are connecting through World Pulse and producing a multiplier effect of change. Women previously unknown by the global public are having their stories picked up from World Pulse by the BBC, CNN, the Canadian Broadcast Corporation,

the UN, and the Huffington Post and beyond. In addition, by networking through World Pulse’s website grassroots women leaders are finding job opportunities, starting new programs and businesses, launching women’s cybercafés, and finding international speaking opportunities that are changing their lives and lifting their communities.

Leila Janah—Sama Group



Leila Janah is the Founder and CEO of [Sama Group](#) and an award-winning social entrepreneur. Prior to Sama Group, Leila was a Visiting Scholar with the [Stanford Program on Global Justice](#) and Australian National University's Center for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics. She was a founding Director of Incentives for Global Health, an initiative to increase R&D spending on diseases of the poor, and a management consultant at Katzenbach Partners (now Booz &

Co.). She has also worked at the World Bank and as a travel writer for Let's Go in Mozambique, Brazil, and Borneo. Leila is a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum, a Director of CARE USA, a 2012 TechFellow, recipient of the inaugural [Club de Madrid Young Leadership Award](#), and the youngest person to win a [Heinz Award](#) in 2014. She received a BA from Harvard and lives in San Francisco.

Jean Case—Case Foundation



[Jean Case](#) is an actively engaged philanthropist who, together with her husband Steve Case, created the Case Foundation in 1997. Jean spent her early days at the [Case Foundation](#) doing a deep-dive into philanthropy and seeking the best ways she could make a difference. After having success with some early initiatives (and learning some really valuable lessons!) Jean realized that she and Steve could make the biggest impact by centering the Foundation around many of the same entrepreneurial

approaches they cultivated throughout their business careers. As Jean would be quick to tell you, a good investment is a good investment - even if the way you measure a return changes somewhat as you move across sectors. The Case Foundation has long believed it is better to focus its efforts on a small number of "[big ideas](#)" focusing on a handful of swing-for-the-fences ideas that have transformative potential. While many of the "big ideas" we have invested in at the Foundation vary in focus, they all are built upon a foundation of leadership, collaboration and entrepreneurship and provide opportunities for meaningful scale and sustainable impact.

Photo: Bill O'Leary/The Washington Post

Nina Nashif—Healthbox



Nina Nashif is the Founder and CEO of **Healthbox**. Nina brings 15 years of experience working within entrepreneurship and healthcare management. Healthbox is a platform to stimulate early-stage innovation, enabling entrepreneurial success while creating a collaborative global ecosystem to build positive change in the healthcare industry. Our goal is to identify high-potential healthcare technology startups that address the

meaningful industry challenges and provide them with the resources, support and network to enable rapid development and growth. As founder and CEO of Healthbox, Nina has been named a 2013 Chicago TechWeek 100 as well as 2013 “Young Global Leader” by the World Economic Forum, an honor awarded to individuals sparking economic development and change around the world. She also spoke at **TEDMED** 2013. In 2012, she was also recognized by the Chicago Crain’s as a “**40 under 40**.”

Nina Nashif, founder and CEO of Healthbox - Laura Baverman