

## Press release

### Investors discuss prejudices against female entrepreneurs

The Vodafone Institute has teamed up with *Süddeutsche Zeitung's* PLAN W: The inaugurating event of the collaboration will be a round-table discussion entitled "Female Effect", which will take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017 in Factory Berlin. The event will bring together a host of prominent personalities as part of the "Gender Lens Investing" format.

**Berlin, 13th November 2017.** The start-up accelerator F-LANE is not the only way in which the Vodafone Institute is expanding its commitment. They are also cooperating with the female-oriented business supplement of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, PLAN W, in a bid to empower female founders in Europe and raise sensitized investors to the gender inequalities they face. A round-table discussion featuring high-caliber participants will take place to launch the cooperation, and to coincide with on the *Süddeutsche Zeitung's* economic summit on 15<sup>th</sup> November in Factory Berlin.

This "Thought Leadership" event will bring 15 investors from Europe together to discuss discrimination against female founders and help set viable measures in motion to ensure that start-ups under female leadership receive due consideration from investors. Studies show that only 17 percent of all tech start-ups worldwide with at least one female founder receive support from investors, despite returns on investment for technology companies with women in leadership positions being 35 percent higher than for companies run exclusively by men.

"Access to capital is still one of the biggest hurdles for female entrepreneurs worldwide," believes Alice Steinbrück, director of the Vodafone Institute for Society and Communications. "The Vodafone Institute supports female entrepreneurs in the technology sector. It is not enough to target female entrepreneurs, however. The number of women in the business won't increase until there has been a change in the mentality of investors.

The "Female Effect" round table marks the beginning of a series of events organized by the Vodafone Institute in cooperation with *Süddeutsche Zeitung's* supplement PLAN W. The focus will be on giving female founders access to capital and raising awareness of gender inequality in the field among investors. "We are very happy to support and actively work with the Vodafone Institute on this important undertaking," said Angela Kesselring, the founder of PLAN W and the executive director of SZ Scala. "Our motto at PLAN W is 'women change business'. Both investors and entrepreneurs are integral parts of our economy, which is why we are doing our utmost to improve conditions for women in business."

### **Background information**

"Gender Lens Investing" focuses on venture capital for female start-up founders. The Vodafone Institute and cooperation partners, Impact Hub Berlin and Social Entrepreneurship Akademie, founded F-LANE in a bid to support women working in technology. The upcoming round-table event "Female Effect" aims to address what many studies cite as the biggest barrier faced by female founders, namely access to capital.

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