



**HIDING IN
PLAIN SIGHT:**

**Impact Investing
in the Creative
Economy**



Upstart Co-Lab connects impact investing to the creative economy. Since 2016, Upstart has been exploring how the \$763 billion creative economy in the U.S. can become more inclusive, equitable and sustainable. By introducing a Creativity Lens, Upstart Co-Lab helps impact investors who understand the power of art, design, culture, heritage and creativity see the



Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA) is a nonprofit organization that currently advises on and manages more than \$200 million in annual giving by individuals, families, corporations and major foundations. Continuing the Rockefeller family's legacy of thoughtful, effective philanthropy, RPA remains at the forefront of philanthropic growth and innovation, with a diverse team of experienced grantmakers with significant depth of knowledge across the spectrum of issue areas. RPA serves as a fiscal sponsor for more than 50 projects, including Upstart Co-Lab.

At Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, our mission is to help donors create thoughtful, effective philanthropy. As part of that, we facilitate more than \$300 million annually in philanthropic initiatives around the world, including incubating over 50 projects. We are proud to serve as the fiscal sponsor for Upstart Co-Lab and to partner on this important new report, the first analysis of the tremendous potential that the creative economy offers to impact investors.

This is a remarkable period of innovation for the arts sector and its broader social and economic impact. Just a few examples from our portfolio in addition to Upstart Co-Lab:

- The Agnes Gund Foundation, the Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors are partners in the Art for Justice Fund, investing more than \$100 million into strategic efforts to reform the U.S. criminal justice system, in part by using arts to give voice to those most affected.
- ArtPlace America, a collaboration of foundations, federal agencies and financial institutions for which we're the fiscal sponsor, has successfully positioned arts and culture as a core component of community planning and development in many locations.
- We oversaw the conceptualization and establishment of the Tippet Rise Art Center, which celebrates sculpture, music, architecture and nature on a 10,000-acre working ranch in Fishtail, Montana – and that's also bringing educational opportunities to local schools, supporting local artists and arts institutions, and increasing tourism revenue to the region.

Upstart Co-Lab's work connecting artist entrepreneurs and impact investors also aligns with Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors' commitment to advancing the field of impact investing. Over the last decade, we have been a key voice in the field of impact investing. We published two ground-breaking monographs in 2008 (Philanthropy's New Passing Gear) and 2009 (Solutions for Impact Investors), which are still used by practitioners and educators today, as well as two more recent donor guides as part of our Roadmap series. We incubated the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) to help build the nascent field. And we have educated donors and their advisors on the full spectrum of approaches toward strategy and implementation, and helped families incorporate impact investing alongside their charitable giving.

We are excited to be partnering with Upstart Co-Lab in their work to increase opportunities for investment in arts and creativity—opportunities that benefit artists, donors and our entire society. We hope this study helps illuminate the bridges that already exist between impact investing and the creative sector, and inspires you to think about ways we can continue to build connections and grow this exciting new economy.

Melissa A. Berman
President & CEO
Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

INTRODUCTION

The Global Impact Investing Network's Annual Impact Investor Survey 2018 reports that zero percent of the respondents' \$228 billion of assets under management were invested in Arts & Culture. This study, however, tells a different story of activity in the creative economy. Using a "creativity lens"¹ that looks at creative activity beyond the limits of art and culture and cuts across traditional investment sectors, Upstart Co-Lab has found that impact investing in the creative economy has been hiding in plain sight.

With a dataset pulled primarily from publicly available lists and previously published primary research,² Upstart Co-Lab has identified 107 funds, representing an estimated \$60 billion AUM, that have been active in the creative economy. (See Appendix A for a description of study methodology.)

CREATIVE ECONOMY DEFINED

The "creative economy" was defined by John Howkins in 2001 as a new way of thinking and doing that revitalizes manufacturing, services, retailing, and entertainment industries with a focus on individual talent or skill, and art, culture, design, and innovation.

Today, creative economy definitions are typically tied to efforts to measure economic activity in a specific geography. A relevant set of art, culture, design, and innovation industries is determined, and the economic contribution of those industries is assessed within a region. A unique set of industries defines each local creative economy reflecting the culture, traditions and heritage of that place.

Based on industry research³, Upstart Co-Lab identified a set of industries comprising the creative economy using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). These NAICS codes describe businesses engaged in the inputs, production, and distribution of creative products, and can be summarized in five creative economy categories: Creative Places, Ethical Fashion, Social Impact Media, Sustainable Food, and Other Creative Businesses.⁴

¹Upstart Co-Lab has defined a creativity lens borrowing from the model set by gender lens investing, the practice of investing for financial return while also considering the benefits to women. As described in ImpactAlpha's article, *Strategic lenses give impact investors an edge on the future* (August 23, 2018), lenses help impact investors to see opportunities that align with their values.

²Upstart Co-Lab's 2017 published reports *Creative Places and Businesses: Catalyzing Community Growth* and *A Creativity Lens for Impact Investing*; Crunchbase, Impact Space and the Tonic Directory databases. For methodology detail, see Appendix A.

³Including research by the Creative Economy Coalition (CEC), a working group of the National Creativity Network; the National Endowment for the Arts and the Bureau of Economic Analysis; Americans for the Arts; the U.K. Department for Culture, Media and Sports; Nesta, a UK-based innovation foundation; and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

⁴https://www.upstartco-lab.org/creativity_lens/naics-codes-creative-businesses/

This investment landscape is not an exhaustive list nor statistically relevant sample of creative economy investing. Rather, it is an illustrative list of funds, across fund types and asset classes, that demonstrate the scope, variety, and opportunity for impact and financial return available in five primary creative economy categories defined by Upstart Co-Lab: Creative Places, Ethical Fashion, Social Impact Media, Sustainable Food, and Other Creative Businesses. (See Appendix B for definitions of these creative economy category.)

In summary, significant investment in the creative economy has been undertaken by Impact investment funds as well as Sustainable & Responsible funds and Conventional funds (see Appendix B for definitions of these fund types), with investment particularly strong in the private equity, private debt and real estate asset classes. Nineteen percent of these funds have explicit creative economy strategies or invest exclusively in one or more of this study's five primary creative economy categories. One-third of the funds were investing in multiple creative economy categories. The Fund and Activity Overview describes investing activity by fund type, creative economy category, and asset class.

The most activity was in the Sustainable Food category, with nearly half of the funds investing, followed by Other Creative Businesses (28% of funds investing), Ethical Fashion (27%), and Social Impact Media (24%). Creative Places was the smallest category, with sixteen percent of funds investing. Detail and highlights of the investing activity in each of these creative economy categories appears below. Several themes emerged from the review of the creative economy investing landscape:

Fund activity highlights the impact value, commercial viability, and innovative edge of creative economy investing: Impact funds, the focus of this study, lead the way, representing just over half of the identified funds and engaging across asset classes and in all creative economy categories. This activity establishes the relevance of the creative economy to impact strategies, and is supported by the engagement of Sustainable & Responsible funds, as the creative economy also aligns with their ESG goals. At the same time, participation of Conventional funds validates the innovation and commercial viability of creative economy categories. Across all three fund types, cutting-edge funds focused on emerging innovation and cultural trends.

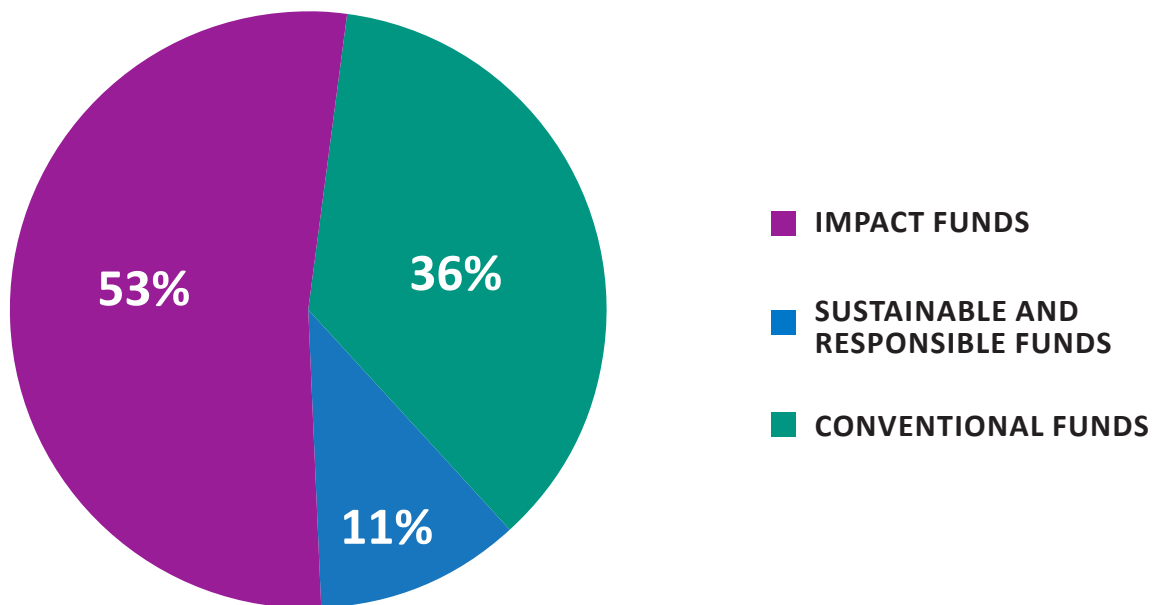
A creativity lens correlates with inclusive economic development and growth: This study identified a correlation between a creativity lens and inclusive economic growth, with 21% of the funds having an explicit inclusivity strategy, above-average diversity among the investment leadership of the venture capital firms, and above-average diversity among founders in the portfolios of venture firms with a creative economy focus.

Fund focus demonstrates the potential of a creativity lens for identifying innovative, impactful, and viable investments in both developed and emerging markets: This study also revealed that the creative economy is part of the focused strategy for funds investing in both developed and emerging markets, demonstrating the relevance of a creativity lens for identifying innovative, impactful and viable investments in rapidly changing economies.

FUND AND ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

This study identified 107 funds that have been investing in the creative economy, and assessed this activity by fund type, creative economy category, and asset class. An overview of these characteristics follows, with further detail provided by category in the following section.

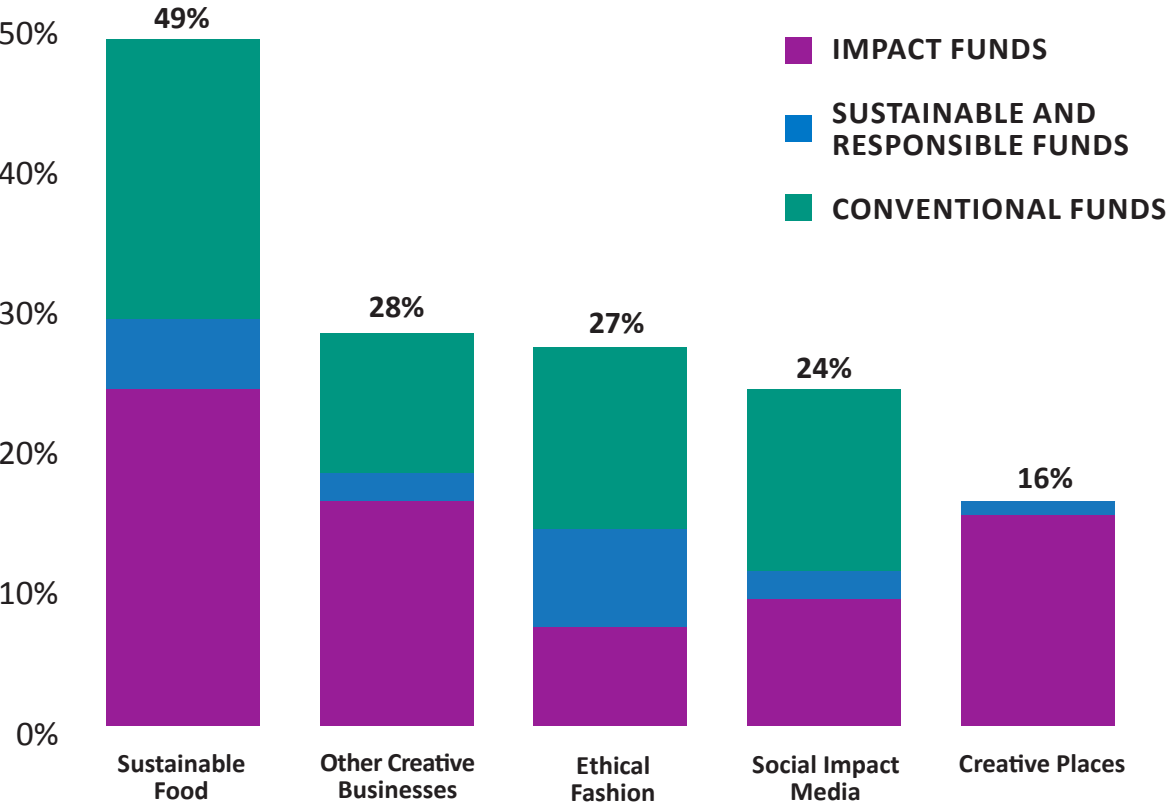
FIGURE 1: FUNDS BY TYPE



Note: Fund types were determined based on each fund's own description of its strategy. See Appendix B for fund type definitions.

FUND TYPES: This study identified 107 funds that have been investing in the creative economy, with just over half (53%) being Impact investment funds, which were the primary focus of this research. Thirty-six percent were Conventional and 11% were Sustainable & Responsible funds (Figure 1).

FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGE OF ALL FUNDS BY CREATIVE ECONOMY CATEGORY



CREATIVE ECONOMY CATEGORIES: Figure 2 shows the percentage of all funds investing in each of the five primary creative economy categories and the breakdown of fund type in each of the categories (note that one-third of the funds were investing in multiple categories; hence the total exceeds 100%).

Sustainable Food was the leading investment category, with nearly half of the funds investing (49%), half of those being Impact funds.

Twenty-eight percent of the funds in this study invested in Other Creative Businesses, and Impact funds also led in this creative economy category.

Ethical Fashion (27%) and Social Impact Media (24%) had approximately one quarter of the funds investing in each; Conventional funds were the most active in these two categories.

Creative Places was the smallest creative economy category with 16% of the funds investing; no Conventional funds included in this study invested in this category which is not surprising given its focus on real estate projects in economically distressed communities.

Additional detail on the activity in each of the creative economy categories is provided in the following section.

ASSET CLASSES: By asset class (Figure 3), the majority (66%) of funds were in private equity; followed by 21% in private debt. The real estate (5%) and private debt & equity (3%) funds were all Impact and Sustainable & Responsible funds. The “other” category consisted of Cash, Public Equity, and Public Debt, including two Sustainable Food-focused Certificate of Deposit products, an organic product-oriented ETF, a publicly-traded venture capital trust, and public debt fund that has invested in Creative Places.

FIGURE 3: FUNDS BY ASSET CLASS

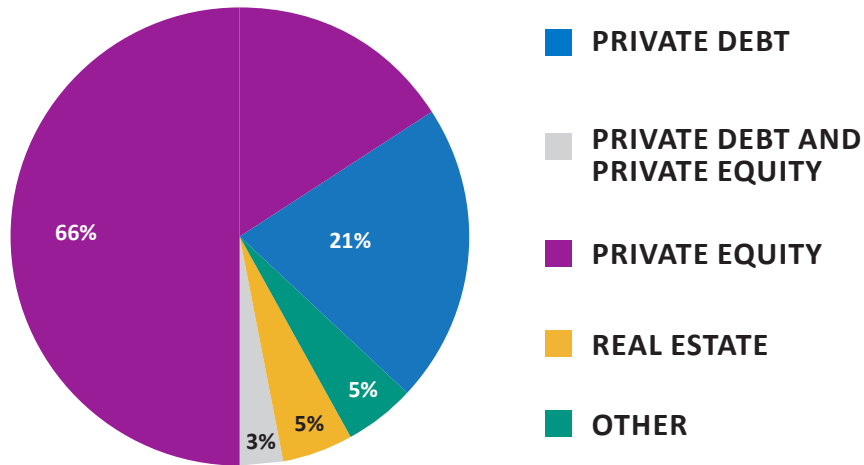
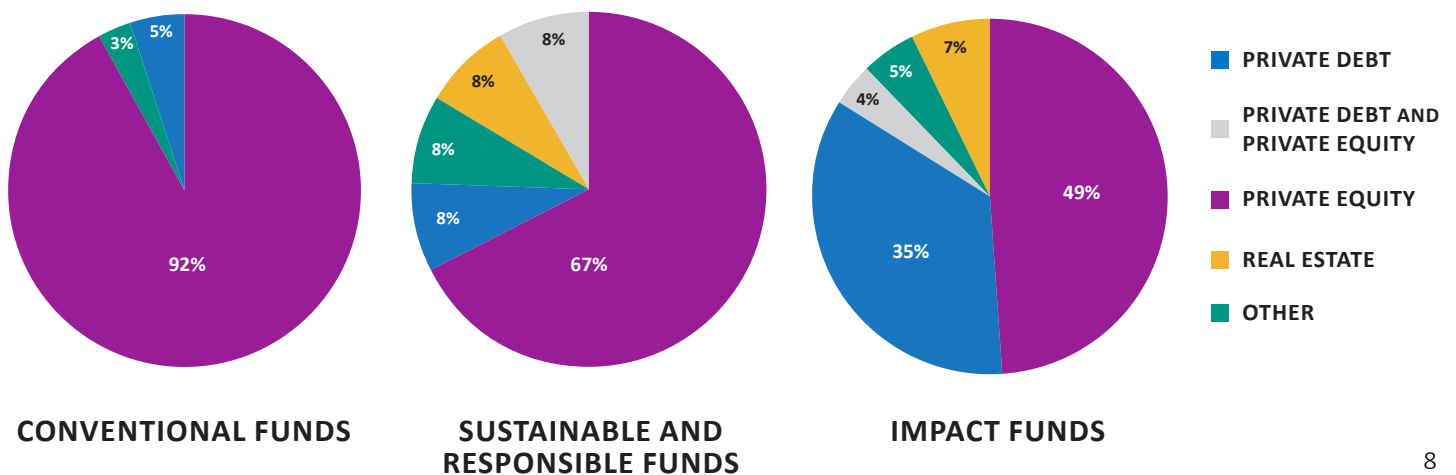


Figure 4 shows the breakdown of asset class activity by fund type. The vast majority of Conventional and Sustainable & Responsible funds were engaged in private equity investing, driven by early-stage and growth venture capital funds focused on tech and consumer product strategies. Nearly half of the Impact funds were in private equity, as well, but there was also strong activity in private debt.

FIGURE 4: ASSET CLASS BREAKDOWN BY FUND TYPE



ACTIVITY BY CREATIVE ECONOMY CATEGORY

SUSTAINABLE FOOD

Fifty-two funds included in this study have been investing in Sustainable Food: 50% Impact, 38% Conventional, and 12% Sustainable & Responsible. These funds are investing in producers and providers of food and beverage products and brands that proactively address and raise consumer awareness of resource conservation, preservation of cultural heritage, and/or access to healthy food. This is the creative economy category with the most activity, reflecting the mainstreaming of organics and growing interest in local and craft foods and beverages.

The majority of funds, 77%, were in the private equity asset class. Nearly half were Conventional funds, with half of those focused on consumer brands generally or food and beverage in particular, like **Maveron** or **Boulder Food Group**. The rest were general or tech-focused funds which are also responding to the market demand for sustainable food products. The majority of Impact and Sustainable & Responsible funds were focused on consumer products or sustainable food and agriculture specifically.

Private debt activity in Sustainable Food was primarily by Impact funds investing in multiple creative economy categories, half of those are CDFIs focusing on economic development in the U.S., and several similarly focused in developing economies.

Notable Impact subgroups include funds and regional angel networks focused on local food systems, like the **RSF Social Finance Food Systems Transformation Fund**, **Cascadia Foodshed Financing Project**, **Austin Foodshed Investors**, and the **Sustainable Local Food Investment Group (SLoFIG)** in Chicago; and funds investing in alternatives to conventional animal agriculture such as **New Crop Capital**, **Stray Dog Capital**, and **Beyond Impact**.

ETHICAL FASHION

Twenty-nine funds in this study, 40% Conventional funds, 34% Impact funds, and 24% Sustainable & Responsible funds, have been investing in Ethical Fashion.

These funds proactively address fashion industry challenges related to labor, environmental impact, governance, and/or preservation of cultural heritage. These funds invest in fashion and apparel manufacturing companies that reduce water usage, incorporate recycled materials and engage in other practices good for the environment; as well as those adhering to fair labor standards for the predominantly female global workforce in the fashion and apparel sector.

These funds also invest in ethical and sustainable consumer platforms and brands helping customers understand and value the differentiation that comes from an ethical and sustainable production process, effectively creating the “storefront” for the ethical and sustainable supply chain.

The majority of the funds in this study investing in Ethical Fashion were private equity funds with a broader focus of either consumer products or technology. Examples include Conventional funds such as **Khosla Ventures** and **First Round Capital**, with respective investments in Everlane and Warby Parker, and Sustainable & Responsible fund **Finn Capital Partners**, with investments in sustainable brands St. Frank and Rothy's.

Four funds were focused specifically on the fashion industry, including **TAU**, a New York and Hong Kong-based firm seeking to transform the textile and apparel value chain in response to the market's greater demand for sustainability and transparency, and Eileen Fisher-backed **Alante Capital**, which aims to "radically improve social and environmental sustainability in the textile and apparel industry by investing in innovative, emerging technologies."

Many mission-driven funds investing in Ethical Fashion are using debt as they work to address labor concerns and economic development goals. Examples include CDFI **Colorado Enterprise Fund's** loan to Knotty Tie, an accessory company offering quality jobs to refugees who have been resettled in Colorado. Knotty Tie also uses on-demand production and advanced textile printing with sustainable fabrics to reduce waste and environmental impact. Another example is CDFI **Craft3's** loan to Kiriko, a Portland, OR-based Japanese textile and apparel brand with a craftsmanship and sustainability ethic.

Since most of the funds invested in Ethical Fashion have a broader consumer-product or technology focus, it is not surprising that over 75% have invested in other creative economy categories, as well. Conventional funds perceive growing consumer demand for products that reflect their values and embody a compelling story, and recognize financial benefits from addressing supply chain challenges. For these reasons, Ethical Fashion is likely to be a growing creative economy category.

SOCIAL IMPACT MEDIA Twenty-six funds in this study, 50% Conventional and the rest mostly Impact funds, have been investing in Social Impact Media. Not surprisingly, over 70% of the activity in this tech-oriented category is in private equity. Conventional venture funds, most general or tech-focused, represent the majority of this equity investment activity.

Businesses in this category are producing video games, film, television, apps, and other content. They are harnessing the power of creativity and culture to educate youth, help patients manage their chronic disease, teach tolerance and empathy, and catalyze positive action for the planet. These are high leverage opportunities that can have a big impact on attitudes, individual behavior and even government policy.

Most of these funds are investing in apps and platforms that educate or increase access or visibility for marginalized groups. A handful of funds focused specifically in media are also incorporating innovative approaches beyond investment to support businesses in this dynamic industry. **New Media**

Ventures, an Impact fund catalyzing progressive change, incorporates a seed fund and angel network, as well as a structure that allows investment in both nonprofit and for-profit business models in advocacy, civic engagement, and voting systems, as well as the media and story-telling platforms that more closely fit this study’s definition of Social Impact Media. **Matter**, another Impact fund, includes a design thinking-oriented accelerator model to support early-stage media ventures “that have the potential to make society more informed, connected and empowered.” Conventional fund **bMuse** uses a studio model to incubate companies that “reshape the way people create and consume media.”

The 23% of funds that utilize debt are primarily impact-oriented. Several of the funds focus on supporting independent media and media access in emerging markets, such as the **Media Development Innovation Fund** and the **South Africa Media Innovation Program**. There are also new funding models for content creation focused on diverse storytellers and their stories in the film/television and game space. For example, **E-Line Media** is launching a \$25 million **Impact Game Slate Fund** which will allow investors to back a portfolio of educational game titles. (see Box: *E-Line Media*)

E-LINE MEDIA

E-Line Media is a social impact video-game developer with a mission to harness the power of games to inspire people to understand and shape the world. One of their most popular games is the BAFTA-winning *Never Alone (Kisima Ingitchuna)*. This is a commercial video game based on an Alaska Native story passed down over thousands of years. The game was funded as mission-aligned impact investment by the Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC), a pioneering Alaska Native social service organization, and inclusively developed in partnership with E-Line Media.

Never Alone has touched a nerve globally. It’s been downloaded over 3 million times, featured in over 1,000 articles, nominated for every major video game award, and helped inspire a movement around inclusive commercial video games that share, celebrate and extend underrepresented voices. CITC has taken their profits, invested in E-Line and is now their largest shareholder.

OTHER CREATIVE BUSINESSES

Thirty funds have been investing in Other Creative Businesses: 57% Impact funds that are split between private debt and private equity, and 33% Conventional venture funds. This category includes facility, input, production, and distribution businesses in arts, design, culture, and heritage industries that are run sustainably, provide quality jobs and have a social impact. Not surprisingly, over half of these general, tech, and consumer-product focused funds are investing in other creative economy categories as well.

The majority of funds with an explicit focus on creativity and innovation – which may not exactly align with Upstart Co-Lab’s definition of the creative economy as defined by industry sectors – were investing in this category. For example,

Designer Fund is a Conventional fund that “invests in leaders and empowers them to improve the world with design.” Designer Fund is focused on creativity as a critical component of the DNA of their portfolio of companies, and core to creating user-friendly solutions that are effective and scalable.

In the UK, Nesta, a “global innovation foundation” views the creative economy and culture as a key element of a vibrant, job-creating economy. Its £7 million **Nesta Arts Impact Fund** combined private, public and philanthropic investment to provide unsecured loans to charitable arts organizations with social enterprises that can show impact. Through the Fund, as well as its policy and education work, Nesta aims to “create one million creative jobs in the UK by 2030 and a resilient innovative arts and cultural sector.” Having fully deployed Fund I, Nesta is currently raising £28 million Fund II which will have a broader remit and include for-profit social enterprises.

Another UK-based fund, **Edge**, invests in dynamic businesses operating in creative industries and enabling technologies. Its first fund was the publicly-traded **Edge Performance Venture Capital Trust**, and its second fund, the **Edge Creative Enterprise Fund**, was launched in 2015 with a significant investment from the government’s British Business Bank, as well as private funding from institutions and high net worth individuals. Edge considers companies in creative and cultural industries to have an advantage in the global economy, as “the key aspect which these businesses have in common is the creation, acquisition, management and commercial exploitation of intellectual property, which translates into economic value.” Edge also recognizes the creative economy as a large and growing sector, representing 10% of the UK economy with employment growing four times faster than the overall economy.

CREATIVE PLACES

Seventeen funds (16 Impact funds and one Sustainable & Responsible fund) have been investing in Creative Places, defined as community-oriented real estate developments that target creatives or businesses in the creative economy. All are private debt funds and real estate funds focused on inclusive economic development that benefits the broader community. The focus of these funds demonstrates how Creative Places fit a comprehensive community development mandate.

Eighty-one percent of the private debt funds are U.S. Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs)⁵, most of which do not have an explicit creative economy strategy. One fund, however, recognizing the role of the creative economy as a driver of economic development, inclusive job creation, and community vitality, has been investing with an explicit creativity lens. The **New Jersey Community Capital Creative Placemaking Fund** invests in “arts and culture-based enterprises and neighborhood development efforts that celebrate the character, diversity and livability of New Jersey communities.”

⁵Community development financial institutions (CDFIs) are private financial institutions that are dedicated to delivering responsible, affordable lending to help underserved people and communities join the economic mainstream.

Similarly, mission-driven real estate developers across the country are incorporating creativity and culture into large-scale mixed-use, mixed-income projects, adding value to their assets and the surrounding communities. Impact real estate fund **Shift Capital**, which launched its inaugural Shift Neighborhood Fund in Philadelphia, PA, has an inclusive development model seeking to positively impact communities experiencing inter-generational poverty. Shift's MaKen Studios offers affordable workspace to artists and makers, creative economy businesses including bakeries and distilleries, and other light manufacturers.

While Creative Places currently represents the least activity of the five creative economy categories investigated in this study, there is growing interest. In London, Investing for Good (in conjunction with the Arts Council England, the Mayor of London's Culture & Creative Industries Unit and the Outset Contemporary Art Fund) is launching the **Creative Land Trust** to address the availability of affordable creative workspace in London. The effort is combining impact investment and philanthropic capital in a £50 million fund to finance affordable creative workspaces which will be protected in perpetuity. In the U.S., national CDFI Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) has launched a \$10 million **NYC Inclusive Creative Economy Fund** to invest in affordable, inclusive creative spaces in New York City (see Box: *LISC NYC Inclusive Creative Economy Fund*).

THE LISC NYC INCLUSIVE CREATIVE ECONOMY FUND

Creative industries are among the fastest growing in New York City. There are more than 25,000 creative economy business in NYC today, but often these businesses face displacement pressures because of rising real estate costs. There are currently 300,000 creative economy jobs, but the workforce in NYC's creative economy does not reflect of the city's demographic diversity.

Developed by the New York City local office of LISC in collaboration with Upstart Co-Lab, The NYC Inclusive Creative Economy Fund provides loans to non-profit and mission-driven organizations that own, lease and manage affordable space so that businesses in the creative economy can get started, take root and thrive. By establishing and preserving affordable spaces for artist studios, cultural activities, creative business incubation, and light manufacturing, the Fund fosters quality jobs for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers.

The NYC Inclusive Creative Economy Fund is the first to align impact investment with the inclusive creative economy. The oldest and largest community development finance institution, LISC has a national network of 33 urban and rural offices, which suggests the potential to replicate this opportunity across multiple states and localities, based on the success of this pioneering effort in New York City.

For more information, visit: lisc.org/InclusiveEconomyNYC

KEY LEARNINGS

In addition to the insights in each of the creative economy categories discussed above, several themes emerged across the entire creative economy landscape:

Fund activity highlights the impact value, commercial viability, and innovative edge of creative economy investing

IMPACT VALUE: Impact funds were active across all five creative economy categories reviewed in this study, and represent nearly all of the investment in Creative Places. Impact funds were also the most active across all asset classes, reflecting their efforts to offer the most appropriate capital for their portfolio companies. This strong activity of Impact funds demonstrates the relevance and strategic value of a creativity lens to diverse impact investing goals.

Similarly, the engagement of Sustainable & Responsible funds across all creative economy categories confirms the alignment of a creativity lens with ESG goals. The majority of the eleven Sustainable & Responsible funds included in this study were consumer product-focused venture funds. Incorporating a more intentional creative economy strategy could help these funds identify additional investment opportunities that align with their efforts to create socially and environmentally sustainable economies.

COMMERCIAL VIABILITY: The participation of Conventional funds driven by company growth prospects and financial return, including leading mainstream venture firms, confirms the commercial viability and market rate return prospects of Sustainable Food, Ethical Fashion, Social Impact Media and Other Creative Businesses. The majority of Conventional funds included in this study are developed market venture capital funds focused on emerging innovation and cultural trends. Funds like **Forerunner Ventures** (“companies who rewrite the rules of culture”), **M3Ventures** (“targeting youth culture and healthy living”), **betaworks ventures** (“surprising new consumer behaviors”), and **Cross Culture Ventures** (“investing in tomorrow’s culture”) exemplify this growth-market positioning on the cultural edge.

INNOVATIVE EDGE: This alignment of the creative economy with next-generation, emerging culture is evident across all of the fund types in this study. For example, **Fifty Years** is a millennial-led, entrepreneur-focused Impact fund aiming to invest in companies that can be “both massively profitable and make a serious dent in achieving one of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals,” while the **Collaborative Fund** understands the impact of shifting cultural values and access to information, investing in innovations in “cities, money, kids, consumer, and health” that will improve human experiences.

A number of Impact funds active in the creative economy are creative themselves, innovating around new structures and investment models. **Purpose Ventures**, for example, invests with a stewardship model, offering a company long-term growth capital that provides investors a return without requiring an exit event. The model is designed to best serve a company's purpose, employees and customers (see Box: *CAN and the Creative Economy Ecosystem*).

The **Grassroots Business Fund**, with a mission to grow viable, sustainable and inclusive businesses that generate earnings or cost savings for people in Africa, Asia and Latin America, has also innovated to best meet the needs of its portfolio companies. The innovative capital structure of its investment fund allows it to make debt, equity, and quasi-equity investments, most of which provide returns through company cash flows, and meet its investors' return and liquidity expectations.

Another example is **Small Change**, which created a crowdfunding platform to "allow everyday people to invest in real estate projects that change cities and neighborhoods for the better," including creativity-driven projects like 1476 Magazine Street in New Orleans, The Liberty Bank Building in Pittsburgh, and Golaski Labs in Philadelphia.

HOW A CREATIVE ECONOMY BUSINESS GREW: CREATIVE ACTION NETWORK

Creative Action Network (CAN), is a global community of artists and designers making art with a purpose. CAN runs crowdsourced artist campaigns around causes, then develops the designs into a variety of goods, from apparel to housewares, which are sold online, benefitting the artists and causes.

After launching five years ago, CAN was accepted into **Matter**, the Social Impact Media accelerator, where it received investment and refined its business model. Despite its progress, CAN's growth trajectory did not meet the expectations of traditional venture firms, and the company focused on self-funding through sales.

As demand increased, however, outside capital became necessary. **Purpose Ventures** structured a "demand dividend" round that provides a percentage of profits to investors until they have received a return of five times their investment, with the company maintaining its ownership. Previous investor **Matter Ventures**, as well as several angel investors, came on board with this structure, recognizing it as a more appropriate approach for this, and many other, social enterprises.⁶

⁶Slavkin, Max, "Our Alternative Journey to Alternative Finance," Medium, July 23, 2018.

A creativity lens correlates with diversity and inclusion

This study also reveals a correlation between the creative economy and goals of investing for diversity and inclusion. Twenty-one percent of the funds in this study have an explicit inclusivity strategy, including nine funds with an explicit focus on investing in underrepresented founders or ensuring inclusive development, and thirteen CDFIs with a mission of increasing access to capital for the underrepresented. With at least two additional funds just launched that are focused on increasing diversity and inclusion at the intersection of media, culture and technology (see Box: *New Funds Launch to Increase Diversity and Inclusion in Media and Technology*), this critical trend is expected to continue.

NEW FUNDS LAUNCH TO INCREASE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

Essence Ventures, an African-American owned investment firm, launched its \$20 million **Essence Creators and Makers Fund** in 2018 to “finance film, television, digital and documentary-style content that reflect the lives and experiences of women of color.” The fund aims to both increase representation of women of color in media as well as in media ownership and financial returns.

Also in 2018, Silicon Valley venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz launched its **Cultural Leadership Fund** to “connect the greatest cultural leaders in the world to the best new technologies.” The firm recognizes the central role African Americans have played in cultural innovation. This is an important recognition of cultural leaders – as opposed to the government or corporate customers - as the new key drivers of the technology industry. The fund’s Limited Partners are exclusively cultural leaders, and its fees and carried interest will be donated to nonprofits that help African-Americans enter the technology industry.

Positive correlations were also found with leadership diversity. In reviewing the senior investment leadership of traditionally-structured venture capital funds in the study, the combined percentage of women and people of color was an impressive 45%.⁷ Relatively strong diversity was also found in portfolio company leadership. Review of the available portfolios for 6 venture funds in this study with explicit creativity strategies or exclusively investing in creative

⁷Review of the publicly available senior investment leadership (Partners, Managing Directors, or Directors, as applicable) of 49 venture capital funds. N = 247 senior investment professionals. Note: that women comprised 31% of the overall senior investment teams of the venture funds, exceeding US venture firms’ 11% representation (O’Brien, Sara Asley. “Female CEOs get only 3% of venture capital money,” CNN Tech, July 26, 2017).

economy categories⁸ found that 26% of the 91 portfolio companies in this subgroup had a female founder or co-founder, exceeding the global venture industries' stagnant level of 17%.⁹ Twenty-nine percent of the portfolio companies had founders that were people of color.

This correlation between emerging culture and trends and diverse leadership reinforces the value of looking for impact investment opportunities through a creativity lens. An increasingly connected global economy and multi-cultural society demands diversity among entrepreneurs and company leadership if enterprises are going to profitably identify, anticipate and meet market needs. Funds and portfolios that reflect an inclusive approach are, and will be, ahead of the pack.

A creativity lens is relevant in both developed and emerging markets

Nineteen percent of the funds in this study had a strategy that explicitly stated creativity as a core driver of their investment thesis (eight funds) or were investing solely in a creative economy category (twelve funds). Interestingly, these twenty funds at the leading edge of creativity strategy were found in all of the creative economy categories and were engaging in both developed and emerging markets.

The United Kingdom is a recognized leader in both impact investing and arts and culture. The U.K. government and leading researchers have recognized that the creative industries are driving local and national economic growth and that creative industries' employment is growing twice as fast as other sectors¹⁰. In keeping with these findings, the **Nesta Arts Impact Fund** and **Edge Creative Enterprise Fund** explicitly cite the value of the creative economy to quality jobs and economic resilience as automation and artificial intelligence rapidly change workforce needs. In the U.S., funds like **SoftMatter** and **Designer Fund** are using creativity as a lens to stay ahead of the market by identifying emerging innovation and cultural trends.

Yet these strategies are also relevant, perhaps even more so, beyond developed markets. The United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization tout the creative economy as “one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the world economy. It is also a highly transformative one in terms of income-generation, job creation and

⁸Review of the portfolio company leadership of six venture funds with either a creativity strategy (5) or investing solely in a creative economy category as defined by Upstart Co-Lab (1), whose full portfolios were publicly available. N = 91 portfolio companies.

⁹Teare, Gene. “The portion of VC-backed startups founded by women stays stubbornly stagnant,” Techcrunch, January 15, 2018.

¹⁰<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jobs-boom-for-uk-creative-industries>

export earnings...World trade of creative goods and services totaled a record US \$624 billion in 2011, more than doubling between 2002 and 2011. The average annual growth rate of the sector during that period was 8.8%, and the exports of creative goods was even stronger in developing countries, averaging 12.1 per cent annually over the same period.”¹¹

This potential is evident in this study. In East Africa, **Heva Fund** is investing in the “transformative social and economic potential of the creative economy sector”, demonstrating the centrality of the creative economy to locally-focused, culture-respecting economic development. Heva’s Start-Up and Growth Funds are providing debt and equity capital to businesses in the Ethical Fashion, Social Impact Media and Other Creative Businesses categories.

Another example is **Global Partnership’s Artisan Market Access Initiative**. Noting that artisans are the second largest area of economic activity in the developing world after agriculture, Global Partnership created the Initiative to invest in intermediaries that provide price premiums and access to markets for artisan laborers living on less than \$5.50 per person, per day, helping to stabilize and grow their income. And **Kinara Indonesia**, an Impact fund that also runs a business accelerator, recently partnered with another Impact fund, **Patamar Capital**, and the Australian government’s Investing in Women initiative to launch an accelerator focused on women-led fashion enterprises.

¹¹United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Creative Economy Report Special Edition*, 2013, p153, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/pdf/creative-economy-report-2013-en.pdf>.

THE CREATIVE ECONOMY AND THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Many impact investors seek to align their portfolios to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to use the SDGs as a way to find like-minded peers, raising the question of whether and how the creative economy contributes to this universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

The SDGs rely on creativity and culture to help achieve global progress towards four of the goals: education, economic growth and employment, sustainable cities, and sustainable consumption and production. The framers of the UN SDGs believe that the creative economy stimulates growth in social, cultural and human development by harnessing dynamic interactions between creativity, culture, economics and technology. The strength of the creative economy is not only found in its innovation but also in its inclusiveness: demand for the best talent and most creative minds opens up employment and empowerment opportunities for diverse entrepreneurs and workers including youth, women, and people of color.¹²

In addition to the creative economy's potential for inclusive economic development, the UN also acknowledges its significant market size and growth rate. According to UNESCO, in 2015, creative industries generated at least \$2.25 billion in revenues, and created 29.5 million job opportunities worldwide.¹³

The findings of this study are consistent with the UN's creative economy assertions. Using a creativity lens, this study identified meaningful and compelling investment activity occurring throughout the creative economy. Across this diverse activity, impact, innovation, inclusion, and broad-based opportunity were indeed emergent themes.

¹²<https://en.unesco.org/sdgs>

¹³<https://en.unesco.org/news/new-report-shows-cultural-and-creative-industries-account-295-million-jobs-worldwide>

LOOKING FORWARD

Why does it matter that impact investing in the creative economy has been hiding in plain sight? Lack of visibility and intention means that when investors ask their wealth advisors for opportunities to invest for impact in the creative economy, they are told the opportunities don't exist.

But they do.

In addition to the backwards-looking research described in this study, Upstart Co-Lab recently identified a pipeline of 125 opportunities to invest in the creative economy for impact today. One-third of these are funds; the rest are direct investments into companies and real estate projects. In aggregate, these 125 opportunities are seeking more than \$3 billion of debt and equity.

Some of the opportunities are small: \$350,000 into a seed stage company. But some are large, like Meow Wolf, an immersive art experience in Santa Fe which is currently raising \$100 million to expand to Denver, Las Vegas and other cities as well as to new platforms like video games and amusement park rides. It sounds like good fun, but there is also real social impact: the state of New Mexico estimates that Meow Wolf will contribute \$350 million of economic impact from its activities in Santa Fe over 10 years.

Some of the opportunities are first time funds, led by new teams with short track records. But then there is the 40-year old, AA-rated community development finance institution LISC which has announced the first inclusive creative economy fund in the U.S. Over its history, LISC has invested in approximately 100 creative economy opportunities in low income communities across the country, deploying approximately \$150 million of its own capital and leveraging approximately \$1 billion of additional capital. By investing in affordable creative workspaces, the new fund will make it possible for low income people to build 21st century skills by working quality jobs in the creative economy.

These opportunities are ultimately investments in creative people. Creative entrepreneurs are launching and growing great companies that are good enough to attract investors who only care about profit. But as true social entrepreneurs, creatives want to attract impact investors who share their values and will help to growth these companies – and the creative economy as a whole -- to be more inclusive, equitable and sustainable.

The impact investing sector concluded a long time ago that intention and purpose count when it comes to determining if an investment is having an impact. Coincidence and luck are not enough. So, what will bring the creative economy out of hiding?

- *Art collectors and art patrons demanding from their wealth advisors opportunities to invest in creative places and creative businesses, not just Picasso paintings.*
- *Foundations paving the way for impact investing in the creative economy—as they already have for the environment and low-income communities—by being first-mover investors.*
- *Endowed cultural institutions (e.g. museums, performing arts centers, fine art schools, performing arts conservatories, artist-endowed foundations) —which by Upstart Co-Lab’s estimate have endowment assets of more than \$58 billion in aggregate—demonstrating some enlightened self-interest, aligning their investment portfolios to drive impact through the creative economy.*

As the investable opportunity at the intersection of cultural diversity and the creative economy is better understood, a creativity lens will be increasingly relevant for a diversity of market contexts and fund types. It is likely that Conventional investing activity in this sector will grow to take advantage of the money-making potential food, fashion, media and other creative sectors have to offer; commercial real estate developments anchored around creativity and innovation, or offering art and culture amenities, already exist.

It is exactly because of the viability and projected growth of this segment of the economy that the continuing and increasing engagement of impact investors will be crucial to ensuring a truly inclusive, equitable and sustainable creative economy with benefits for all.

THREE REASONS FOR IMPACT INVESTORS TO EMBRACE A CREATIVITY LENS

Increase quality impact investment opportunities and portfolio diversification:

Including the creative economy categories puts new high-potential investment opportunities in scope. With opportunities across asset classes, industries, and geographies, adding these categories to the impact investing universe also offers investors a chance to diversify their market exposure.

Increase opportunities for meaningful, sustainable impact:

Investors can further their current impact goals by including creative economy businesses in their portfolio. Businesses in the creative economy categories are delivering impact for the environment, health and education among other priorities, and can do so with businesses that are supporting and creating inclusive, broad-based opportunity.

Build and maintain a sustainable creative economy:

As the investable opportunity at the intersection of cultural diversity and the creative economy is better understood, it is likely that Conventional investing activity will increase. The presence of capital that values inclusion, equity, and sustainability can ensure that companies in the creative economy continue to provide quality jobs, act positively for the environment, and strengthen their communities.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

This creative economy investment landscape is not an exhaustive list nor a statistically valid sample of creative economy investing. Rather, it is a representative list of funds, across asset classes, that were identified as being active in Upstart Co-Lab's creative economy sectors (Appendix B) and meeting inclusion criteria. Detail on the data sources and inclusion criteria is as follows:

DATA SOURCES

This study utilized unreleased and previously released resources from Upstart Co-Lab. Between December 2017 and April 2018, Upstart Co-Lab engaged NYU Stern undergraduate and graduate students to identify funds and other entities investing in the creative economy. They provided Upstart Co-Lab with 2 sets of data:

- A list of venture capital funds, angel investor networks and accelerators with a stated focus on either food, fashion or creative industries. The main data source for this research was Crunchbase.
- A list of companies and impact investors pulled from transactions in the food, fashion, and media industries that were listed in the publicly available Impact Space and Toniic Directory databases.

In addition to these datasets, information about the activity of Private Debt funds, CDFIs and Real Estate funds were gathered from Upstart Co-Lab's 2017 published reports Creative Places and Businesses and A Creativity Lens for Impact Investing. During this study, additional funds making investments in the creative economy were added from a variety of sources both proprietary and public, such as ImpactAlpha.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

The datasets were then reviewed to determine the creative economy activity landscape. To be included in the creative economy landscape, entities had to meet the following criteria:

- The fund/entity's investment capital included capital raised from external investors
- The fund/entity had an investment thesis focused on creativity and inclusive of one or more of the creative economy sector(s) as defined in Appendix B OR The fund/entity had at least two investments in creative economy sector(s) as defined in Appendix B

Using this data and inclusion criteria, Upstart Co-Lab identified 103 entities/funds for inclusion in this creative economy investing landscape.

APPENDIX B.1: CREATIVE ECONOMY

CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

CREATIVE PLACES	Real estate projects that are affordable, target creatives or businesses in the creative economy, and benefit their neighbors. <i>(e.g. mixed-use developments anchored in the arts; affordable housing or workspace for artists and creatives; offices for arts organizations and creative businesses; incubators and accelerators for creative economy businesses; fabrication and light manufacturing space; arts-based senior housing; or cultural venues)</i>
ETHICAL FASHION	Companies across the supply chain producing clothes, shoes, jewelry and accessories that proactively address industry challenges related to labor, environmental impact, governance, and/or preservation of cultural heritage. <i>(e.g. fashion companies addressing job quality, working conditions and safety; fashion companies addressing resource conservation or toxin reduction; fashion companies facilitating local community engagement or cultural preservation)</i>
OTHER CREATIVE BUSINESSES	Other facility, input, production, and distribution businesses in arts, design, culture, and heritage industries that are run sustainably, provide quality jobs and have a social impact. <i>(e.g. artisan handicraft businesses; sustainable tourism businesses engaged in cultural preservation and exchange; design-build firms offering quality jobs)</i>
SOCIAL IMPACT MEDIA	Companies that leverage the power of communication, storytelling and technology to drive positive social outcomes at scale, give a platform to under-represented voices and/or build a diverse workforce. <i>(e.g. film and television, video games, apps, new and old media that build awareness, skills, or knowledge; create community or give voice to underrepresented and marginalized groups; preserve cultural heritage; offer quality jobs)</i>
SUSTAINABLE FOOD	Producers and providers of food and beverage products and brands that proactively address and raise consumer awareness of resource conservation, preservation of cultural heritage, and/or access to healthy food. <i>(e.g. artisan and sustainable food & beverage producers and brands; restaurants, caterers, and other hospitality companies focused on these issues; any of these companies prioritizing quality jobs)</i>

APPENDIX B.2: FUND TYPE DEFINITIONS

Fund types were determined based on the Fund’s own description of its strategy per the following type definitions:

IMPACT	Impact investments aim to generate specific social or environmental benefits in addition to financial returns.
SUSTAINABLE & RESPONSIBLE	Sustainable investments proactively integrate environmental, social and governance (“ESG”) factors into core investment decision-making processes. Responsible investments negatively screen out investment opportunities due to conflicts or inconsistencies with personal or organizational values, non-conformity to global environmental standards, or adherence to certain codes of practice.
CONVENTIONAL	Conventional investments follow the traditional investment approach with an emphasis on financial return maximization without explicit regard for social and/or environmental factors.

APPENDIX B.3: ASSET CLASS DEFINITIONS

CASH AND EQUIVALENTS	Cash and highly liquid, high credit quality investment securities that can be easily converted into cash, such as money market funds and Treasury Bills.
PRIVATE DEBT	Loans to private entities, including individual loans, loan funds and loans to real estate projects.
PRIVATE EQUITY	Equity capital invested in companies that are not listed on a public exchange, such as angel investments and venture fund investments into private companies and mezzanine and buyout private equity funds.
PUBLIC EQUITY	Equity capital invested in a company traded on a public exchange, such as stocks and mutual funds.
REAL ESTATE	Debt and equity investments in the acquisition, development or ownership of real property.

APPENDIX C: FUNDS REVIEWED IN *HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT: IMPACT INVESTING IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY*

CREATIVE PLACES: IMPACT FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Cincinnati Development Fund	Private Debt	New Jersey Community Capital is a CDFI that invests in quality homes, educational facilities, and employment opportunities in underserved communities. NJCC's Creative Placemaking Fund (CPF) deploys capital to arts and culture based enterprises and neighborhood development efforts that celebrate the character, diversity, and livability of New Jersey communities.	Cincinnati, OH	cindevfund.org
Community Capital Management	Public Debt	Propel NonProfits is a CDFI that invests in small and middle-sized arts and culture nonprofits to add equity to their balance sheets and let the leaders of the nonprofits be more strategic and visionary in their work.	Weston, FL	ccminvests.com
Continuum Partners	Real Estate	RSF Social Finance is a nonprofit social finance organization that offers investing, lending and giving services to those who are committed to improving society and the environment.	Denver, CO and Los Angeles, CA	continuumpartners.com
Craft3	Private Debt	Shift Capital is a real estate impact fund that acquires and improves existing real estate stock and re-tenants those assets with businesses and individuals sharing a common vision to revitalize urban neighborhoods.	Oregon and Washington	craft3.org
Enterprise Community Loan Fund	Private Debt	Small Change is a crowdfunding platform that allows everyday people to invest in real estate projects that change cities and neighborhoods for the better.	Columbia, MD	enterprisecommunity.org
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)	Private Debt	Sugar Hill Capital Partners Studio Program is a real estate fund that supports New York City's artist community by converting unutilized multi-family buildings into affordable art studios.	New York, NY	lisc.org
Nesta Arts Impact Fund I	Private Debt	The Progress Fund is a CDFI that provides financing to people who are starting, expanding, or buying small businesses.	London, United Kingdom	artsimpactfund.org
New Jersey Community Capital	Private Debt	The Reinvestment Fund is a CDFI that invests in projects such as high-quality grocery stores, affordable housing, schools, and health centers to help families lead healthier, more productive lives.	New Brunswick, NJ	newjerseycommunitycapital.org

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
New Jersey Community Capital Creative Placemaking Fund	Private Debt	New Jersey Community Capital is a CDFI that invests in quality homes, educational facilities, and employment opportunities in underserved communities. NJCC's Creative Placemaking Fund (CPF) deploys capital to arts and culture based enterprises and neighborhood development efforts that celebrate the character, diversity, and livability of New Jersey communities.	New Brunswick, NJ	asdfnewjerseycommunitycapital.org/initiatives/creative-place-making-fund
Propel NonProfits Equity Builder Loan Program	Private Debt	Propel NonProfits is a CDFI that invests in small and middle-sized arts and culture nonprofits to add equity to their balance sheets and let the leaders of the nonprofits be more strategic and visionary in their work.	Minneapolis, MN	propelnonprofits.org/equity-builder-loan-program
RSF Social Finance	Private Debt	RSF Social Finance is a nonprofit social finance organization that offers investing, lending and giving services to those who are committed to improving society and the environment.	San Francisco, CA	rsfsocialfinance.org
Shift Capital	Real Estate	Shift Capital is a real estate impact fund that acquires and improves existing real estate stock and re-tenants those assets with businesses and individuals sharing a common vision to revitalize urban neighborhoods.	Philadelphia, PA	shiftcapital.us
Small Change	Real Estate	Small Change is a crowdfunding platform that allows everyday people to invest in real estate projects that change cities and neighborhoods for the better.	Pittsburgh, PA	smallchange.com
Sugar Hill Capital Partners Studio Program	Real Estate	Sugar Hill Capital Partners Studio Program is a real estate fund that supports New York City's artist community by converting unutilized multi-family buildings into affordable art studios.	New York, NY	sugarhillre.com/studioprogram#about-studioprogram
The Progress Fund	Private Debt	The Progress Fund is a CDFI that provides financing to people who are starting, expanding, or buying small businesses.	Greensburg, PA	progressfund.org
The Reinvestment Fund	Private Debt	The Reinvestment Fund is a CDFI that invests in projects such as high-quality grocery stores, affordable housing, schools, and health centers to help families lead healthier, more productive lives.	Philadelphia, PA	reinvestment.com

CREATIVE PLACES: SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Brinshore Development	Real Estate	Brinshore Development is an innovative real estate fund that specializes in the development of residential communities that foster conservation, collaboration, and affordability and partners with arts organizations, government agencies, and non-profit housing organizations to respond to local needs and conditions.	Northbrook, IL	brinshore.com

ETHICAL FASHION: IMPACT FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Alante Capital	Private Equity	Alante Capital is a venture capital fund investing in innovative companies that radically improve social and environmental sustainability in the textile and apparel industry.	Santa Barbara, CA	alantecapital.com
Backstage Capital	Private Equity	Backstage Capital is a venture capital fund that invests in early stage companies led by underrepresented founders across a diverse range of industries including ethical fashion and media.	Los Angeles, CA	backstagecapital.com
Closed Loop Ventures	Private Equity	Closed Loop Ventures is a Venture fund that invests in sustainable consumer goods, advance recycling technologies and services related to the circular economy.	Philadelphia, PA	closedlooppartners.com/ closed-loop-ventures
Coastal Enterprises Inc (CEI)	Private Debt	Coastal Enterprises Inc (CEI) is a CDFI that finances businesses to address operational, workforce, and environmental challenges in key industries including farming, aquaculture, and food manufacturing.	Brunswick, ME	ceimaine.org
Colorado Enterprise Fund	Private Debt	Colorado Enterprise Fund is a CDFI that finances start-ups and small businesses in the manufacturing, retail, and whole sale trades that are unable to secure traditional bank financing.	Denver, CO	coloradoenterprisefund.org
Craft3	Private Debt	Craft3 is a CDFI that provides small business, nonprofit, clean energy, and conservation loans to strengthen businesses, families, and the environment.	Oregon and Washington	craft3.org
Grassroots Business Fund	Private Debt & Equity	The Grassroots Business Fund is a non-profit that builds and supports high-impact enterprises that provide sustainable economic opportunities to thousands of people at the base of the economic pyramid in Africa, Asia and Latin America	Washington, DC	gbfund.org
Investors' Circle-Social Venture Network (IC-SVN)	Private Equity	Investors' Circle is an impact angel network investing in early stage companies that are dedicated to improving the environment, education, health, and community.	Durham, NC	investorscircle.net
Natural Capital Investment Fund	Private Debt	Natural Capital Investment Fund is a small business loan fund that supports entrepreneurs who are creating jobs and businesses in underserved communities in central Appalachia and the Southeast.	Shepherdstown, WV	ncifund.org
Patamar Capital and Kinara Indonesia Impact Accelerator Program	Private Equity	Patamar Capital "makes venture capital investments in high-growth companies solving South and Southeast Asia's most pervasive problems at scale." Focused on improving supply chains to unlock better economic opportunities for the working poor and creating innovative distribution platforms to provide essential goods and services to underserved consumers.	San Francisco, CA	patamar.com

ETHICAL FASHION: SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Finn Capital Partners	Private Equity	Finn Capital Partners is a venture capital fund that invests in early-stage businesses creating consumer products.	San Francisco, CA	finncapitalpartners.com
Heva Growth Fund	Private Debt	Heva Fund invests in the transformative social and economic potential of the creative economy sector in the East African region. The Growth Fund is a complementary facility alongside the existing early stage finance fund that provides working capital, asset financing, supply chain finance, capital investment, and follow on financing up to KES 30,000,000.	Nairobi, Kenya	hevafund.com
Heva Start-up Fund	Private Debt & Equity	Heva Fund invests in the transformative social and economic potential of the creative economy sector in the East African region. The start-up fund assists businesses increase their production capacities, launch new product lines, invest in new technology, or expand their distribution networks as a runway to investor readiness. Businesses undertaking their first applications can receive up to KES 1,000,000 in flexible debt, and a tailored package of up to KES 10,000,000 in subsequent applications.	Nairobi, Kenya	hevafund.com
Resonance	Private Equity	Resonance is a Venture Operating Company that invests in early-stage fashion companies to build sustainable creator-driven brands.	New York, NY	resonancecompanies.com
SoftMatter VC	Private Equity	SoftMatter VC is a seed stage venture capital fund that invests in sustainable food, fashion, and consumer good companies.	New York, NY	softmatter.vc
TAU Opportunities (Asia) Fund	Private Equity	TAU is a venture capital fund that invests in early-stage, high technology apparel manufacturing segments to drive profitability and meet the levels of sustainability and transparency.	New York and Hong Kong	tau-investment.com/en_US
Textile Innovation Fund	Private Equity	The Textile Innovation Fund is a venture capital fund that provides growth equity to innovative companies in the textile sector, including fiber technology, digital applications, innovation in the supply chain, and techniques that make textile production more efficient or sustainable.	The Hague, NL	textielinnovatiefonds.nl

ETHICAL FASHION: CONVENTIONAL FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Fashion Capital Partners	Private Equity	Fashion Capital Partners is a venture capital fund that invests in early-stage fashion and luxury tech start-ups and innovative high-end designers.	Paris, France	fashioncapitalpartners.com
Felicis Ventures	Private Equity	Felicis Ventures is a venture capitalist fund that provides seed through Series C investments to companies focusing on the areas of mobile, e-commerce, enterprise, education, and health.	Menlo Park, CA	felicis.com
First Round Capital	Private Equity	First Round Capital is a venture capital fund that invests in seed stage consumer, fintech, healthcare, hardware, and enterprise technology companies.	San Francisco, CA	firstround.com
Floodgate	Private Equity	Floodgate is a venture capital fund that invests in early, seed, and late stage digital businesses.	Palo Alto, CA	floodgate.com
Forerunner Ventures	Private Equity	Forerunner Ventures is a venture capital fund investing in early-stage B2C to B2B companies that include brand platforms, marketplaces, innovative retail experiences, enabling technologies, and select backend SaaS and infrastructure platforms.	San Francisco, CA	forerunnerventures.com
Halogen Ventures	Private Equity	Halogen Ventures is an early stage venture capital fund focused on female founded consumer technology companies.	Los Angeles, CA	halogenvc.com
Lerer Hippeau	Private Equity	Lerer Hippeau is an early-stage venture capital fund that invests in consumer, digital media, e-commerce, emerging tech, and enterprise software companies.	New York, NY	lererhippeau.com
M3 Ventures	Private Equity	M3 Ventures is a consumer venture capital fund that invests in seed and Series A companies in the lifestyle, e-commerce, health and fitness, green products, and organic food and beverage industries.	New York, NY	m3ventures.com
Maveron	Private Equity	Maveron is a venture capital fund that invests in seed and Series A consumer companies that directly engage, evangelize, and enchant customers.	San Francisco, CA and Seattle, WA	maveron.com
Revolution Growth	Private Equity	Revolution is a venture capital fund that invests in companies offering more choice, convenience, and control for both consumers and businesses. Revolution Growth invests in “speed-ups,” helping two to three technology-enabled businesses per year take ideas from niche to mass and scale to capitalize on huge market opportunities.	La Jolla CA	revolution.com/entity/growth
Slow Ventures	Private Equity	Slow Ventures is a venture capital fund that invests in early-stage companies focused on consumer products, technology, biotechnology, and cryptocurrency.	San Francisco, CA	slow.co
Sunrise Strategic Partners	Private Equity	Sunrise Strategic Partners is a venture capital fund that invests in emerging brands in the healthy, active, and sustainable living spaces that resonate with millennials.	Boulder, CO	sunrisestrategicpartners.com

SOCIAL IMPACT MEDIA: IMPACT FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Backstage Capital	Private Equity	Backstage Capital is a venture capital fund that invests in early stage companies led by underrepresented founders across a diverse range of industries including ethical fashion and media.	Los Angeles, CA	backstagecapital.com
Boston Community Capital Venture Fund	Private Equity	Boston community Capital is a CDFI investing in projects that provide affordable housing, good jobs, and new opportunities in low-income communities. The Boston community Capital Venture Fund provides equity investments in high-potential businesses that create financial, social, and environment returns across a broad range of industries including transportation, media, education, and food services.	Boston, MA	bostoncommunitycapital.org/programs-services/venture-fund
Camelback Ventures	Private Equity	Camelback Ventures is an accelerator that provides capital to education ventures lead by underrepresented entrepreneurs to improve educational outcomes for students and create opportunities in low-income communities.	New Orleans, LA	camelbackventures.org
E-line Media Impact Slate Game Fund	Private Debt	The Impact Game Slate Fund will be a mission-based investment initiative whose stakeholders seek to harness the power of video games to inspire players to understand and shape the world The Slate will fund the development and publishing of video games and educational media components for distribution in the consumer and educational channels and support the operation of interest-driven learning programs within both informal and formal learning contexts.	Tempe, AZ	elinemedia.com
Emerging Media Opportunity Fund	Private Equity	Emerging Media Opportunity Fund LP is a private equity fund operated by Media Development Investment Fund, Inc.	N/A	N/A
Matter VC	Private Equity	Matter VC is an accelerator for early-stage media ventures with a human-centered, prototype driven design process.	San Francisco, CA and New York, NY	matter.vc
Media Development Investment Fund (MDIF)	Private Debt	MDIF is a nonprofit fund that finances independent news and information businesses to help them become financially sustainable.	New York, NY	mdif.org
New Media Ventures	Private Equity	New Media Ventures is a venture capital fund that invests in media and tech startups disrupting politics and catalyzing progressive change.	San Francisco, CA	newmediaventures.org
Quotidian Ventures	Private Equity	Quotidian Ventures is a pre-seed venture capital fund that invests in companies using technology to transform large, existing industries.	New York, NY	quotidian.co
South Africa Media Innovation Program	Private Debt	MDIF is a nonprofit fund that finances independent news and information businesses to help them become financially sustainable. South Africa Media Innovation Program is an accelerator run by the MDIF that supports existing media companies, nonprofit-organizations, and new ventures trying new approaches to local news and information.	New York, NY	samip.mdif.org

SOCIAL IMPACT MEDIA: SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Heva Growth Fund	Private Debt	Heva Fund invests in the transformative social and economic potential of the creative economy sector in the East African region. The Growth Fund is a complementary facility alongside the existing early stage finance fund that provides working capital, asset financing, supply chain finance, capital investment, and follow on financing up to KES 30,000,000.	Nairobi, Kenya	hevafund.com
Heva Start-up Fund	Private Debt & Equity	Heva Fund invests in the transformative social and economic potential of the creative economy sector in the East African region. The start-up fund assists businesses increase their production capacities, launch new product lines, invest in new technology, or expand their distribution networks as a runway to investor readiness. Businesses undertaking their first applications can receive up to KES 1,000,000 in flexible debt, and a tailored package of up to KES 10,000,000 in subsequent applications.	Nairobi, Kenya	hevafund.com

SOCIAL IMPACT MEDIA: CONVENTIONAL FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Aperture Media Partners	Private Debt	Aperture Media Partners is a media finance, advisory, and production company that is a one-stop shop for producers, studios, sales agents, and content creators seeking financing solutions and production partners.	West Hollywood, CA	aperturemediapartners.com
Betaworks Fund	Private Equity	Betaworks Fund is a venture capital fund that invests in early-stage companies at the intersection of media and technology.	New York, NY	betaworks.com/fund
bMuse	Private Equity	bMuse is a venture builder for early-stage companies primarily in the media industry.	New York, NY	bmuse.com
Cross Culture Ventures	Private Equity	Cross Culture Ventures is a venture capital fund that invests in entrepreneurs creating next generation technology and consumer products.	Culver City, CA	crossculturevc.com
Edge Performance VCT	Public Equity	Edge is a venture capital fund that invests in early stage companies at the intersection of creativity and technology spanning across areas including computer gaming, fashion, artificial intelligence, and virtual and augmented reality. Edge Performance VCT, a publicly traded trust listed on the London Stock Exchange, invests in early ventures that promote live music, theatre, sports, festival trade shows, exhibitions, and other similar events.	London, UK	edge.uk.com/edge-performance-funds/

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
First Round Capital	Private Equity	First Round Capital is a venture capital fund that invests in seed stage consumer, fintech, healthcare, hardware, and enterprise technology companies.	San Francisco, CA	firstround.com
Floodgate	Private Equity	Floodgate is a venture capital fund that invests in early, seed, and late stage digital businesses.	Palo Alto, CA	floodgate.com
Forerunner Ventures	Private Equity	Forerunner Ventures is a venture capital fund investing in early-stage B2C to B2B companies that include brand platforms, marketplaces, innovative retail experiences, enabling technologies, and select backend SaaS and infrastructure platforms.	San Francisco	forerunnerventures.com
Greycroft Partners	Private Equity	Greycroft Partners is a venture capital fund that invests in internet and mobile start-ups working in the areas of data and AI, fintech, adtech, healthcare, retail, tech-enabled services, publishing, gaming, enterprise software, and technology.	New York, NY	greycroft.com
Insight Venture Partners	Private Equity	Insight Venture Partners is a venture capital fund that invests in early-staged B2B and B2C software companies.	New York, NY	insightpartners.com
Lerer Hippeau	Private Equity	Lerer Hippeau is an early-stage venture capital fund that invests in consumer, digital media, e-commerce, emerging tech, and enterprise software companies.	New York, NY	lererhippeau.com
Revolution Ventures	Private Equity	Revolution is a venture capital fund that invests in companies offering more choice, convenience, and control for both consumers and businesses. Revolution Ventures focuses on early-stage venture capital investments in technology-enabled businesses that disrupt existing multi-billion dollar industries.	La Jolla CA	revolution.com/entity/ventures
Shasta Ventures Camera Fund	Private Equity	Shasta Ventures Camera Fund is an early-stage venture capital fund that invests in companies redefining end-user experiences with technology.	Menlo Park, CA	shastaventures.com

SUSTAINABLE FOOD: IMPACT FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Cincinnati Development Fund	Private Debt	Cincinnati Development Fund is a CDFI that provides funding for residential, commercial, creative place making, and healthy food facility projects to strengthen low-income neighborhoods and improve lives.	Cincinnati, OH	cindevfund.org
Austin Foodshed Investors	Private Debt & Equity	Austin Foodshed Investors is an angel network that invests in early-staged entrepreneurs in the food space to fund sustainable and reasonable growth.	Austin, TX	austinfoodshedinvestors.org/about.html
Beyond Impact Vegan Partners	Private Equity	Beyond Impact Vegan Partners is a venture capital fund that supports early-stage entrepreneurs in the biotechnology, food manufacturing, apparel, and lifestyle sectors to promote a more innovative, fairer, and sustainable economic model that meets the needs of the growing population.	Geneva, Switzerland	beyondimpact.ch
Boston Community Capital Loan Fund	Private Debt	Boston community Capital is a CDFI investing in projects that provide affordable housing, good jobs, and new opportunities in low-income communities. The Boston community Capital Loan fund provides innovative, flexible loan capital to finance community-based projects and facilities that enhance and stabilize fragile communities in a time of economic uncertainty.	Boston, MA	
Boston Community Capital Venture Fund	Private Equity	Boston community Capital is a CDFI investing in projects that provide affordable housing, good jobs, and new opportunities in low-income communities. The Boston community Capital Venture Fund provides equity investments in high-potential businesses that create financial, social, and environment returns across a broad range of industries including transportation, media, education, and food services.	Boston, MA	
CEI Ventures	Private Equity	Coastal Enterprises Inc (CEI) is a CDFI that finances businesses to address operational, workforce, and environmental challenges in key industries including farming, aquaculture, and food manufacturing. CEI Ventures is a separate for-profit subsidiary managing socially responsible venture capital funds.	Brunswick, ME	ceiventures.com
Coastal Enterprises Inc (CEI)	Private Debt	Coastal Enterprises Inc (CEI) is a CDFI that finances businesses to address operational, workforce, and environmental challenges in key industries including farming, aquaculture, and food manufacturing.	Brunswick, ME	ceimaine.org
Colorado Enterprise Fund	Private Debt	Colorado Enterprise Fund is a CDFI that finances start-ups and small businesses in the manufacturing, retail, and whole sale trades that are unable to secure traditional bank financing.	Denver, CO	coloradoenterprisefund.org
Fifty Years	Private Equity	Fifty Years is an early-stage venture capital fund that invests in companies achieving one of the Sustainable Development Goals.	San Francisco, CA	fifty.vc

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Grassroots Business Fund	Private Debt & Equity	The Grassroots Business Fund is a non-profit that builds and supports high-impact enterprises that provide sustainable economic opportunities to thousands of people at the base of the economic pyramid in Africa, Asia and Latin America	Washington, DC	gbfund.org
Investors' Circle-Social Venture Network (IC-SVN)	Private Equity	Investors' Circle is an impact angel network investing in early stage companies that are dedicated to improving the environment, education, health, and community.	Durham, NC	investorscircle.net
Kapor Capital	Private Equity	Kapor Capital invests in seed and early stage startups that solve real world problems in the fields of education, finance, health, work, and justice.	Oakland, CA	kaporcapital.com
Natural Capital Investment Fund	Private Debt	Natural Capital Investment Fund is a small business loan fund that supports entrepreneurs who are creating jobs and businesses in underserved communities in central Appalachia and the Southeast.		ncifund.org
New Crop Capital	Private Equity	New Crop Capital is a venture capital fund that provides angel, seed, and series A funding to companies developing meat, dairy, eggs, and seafood with plant-based ingredients or through cellular agriculture, as well as companies that promote and distribute these products.	San Francisco, CA	newcropcapital.com
New Resource Bank Impact CD	Cash	New Resource Bank is a community bank that offers commercial loan and deposit products for businesses and organizations in the renewable and alternative energy, green building, organic food, and green product and service industries.	San Francisco, CA	newresourcebank.com
ONE WORLD Impact Fund	Private Equity	ONE WORLD Impact Fund is an impact seed fund that invests in early-stage companies improving the lives of individuals in the areas including health, food, and youth education.	Palo Alto, CA	oneworld.training/criteria
Patamar Capital and Kinara Indonesia Impact Accelerator Program	Private Equity	Patamar Capital" makes venture capital investments in high-growth companies solving South and Southeast Asia's most pervasive problems at scale." Focused on improving supply chains to unlock better economic opportunities for the working poor and creating innovative distribution platforms to provide essential goods and services to underserved consumers.	San Francisco, CA	patamar.com
PowerPlant Ventures	Private Equity	PowerPlant Ventures is a growth equity fund that invests in emerging plant-centric consumer food, beverage, and foodservice companies.	Manhattan Beach, CA	powerplantvc.com
Radicle Impact	Private Equity	Radicle Impact is an early stage Venture Capital firm that invests in responsible finance, clean energy, and healthy food sectors.	Oakland, CA	radicleimpact.com
RSF Social Finance	Private Debt	RSF Social Finance is a nonprofit social finance organization that offers investing, lending and giving services to those who are committed to improving society and the environment.	San Francisco, CA	rsfsocialfinance.org

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
RSF Social Finance Food System Transformation Fund	Private Debt	RSF Social Finance is a nonprofit social finance organization that offers investing, lending and giving services to those who are committed to improving society and the environment. RSF Social Finance Food System Transformation Fund leverages philanthropic dollars to invest in enterprises working to build local food systems.	San Francisco, CA	rsfsocialfinance.org/invest/food-system-fund
Self-Help Credit Union Green Certificate of Deposit (CD)	Cash	Self-Help Credit Union is a community bank that provides financial services, lends to small businesses and nonprofits, develops real estate, and promotes fair financial practices.	North Carolina	www.self-help.org
Slow Money	Private Equity	Slow Money is a network that invests in organic farms and food enterprises to address the critical challenges of climate change, health, and community resilience.	Boulder, CO	slowmoney.org
Stray Dog Capital	Private Equity	Stray Dog Capital is a venture capital fund that invests in early-stage businesses developing products and services that will replace animal use in the supply chain.	Leawood, KS	straydogcapital.com
Sustainable Local Food Investment Group - SLoFIG	Private Equity	Sustainable Local Food Investment Group (SLoFIG) is an angel investor network that supports start-ups and early-stage companies re-establishing a robust and sustainable food system across the Chicago foodshed.	Chicago, IL	slofig.com
The Cascadia Foodshed Financing Project	Private Equity	Cascadia Foodshed Financing Project is an angel network that invests in food startups and growth stage businesses to grow the Pacific Northwest's regional food economy.	Edmonds, WA	cascadiafoodshed.org
The Progress Fund	Private Debt	The Progress Fund is a CDFI that provides financing to people who are starting, expanding, or buying small businesses.	Greensburg, PA	progressfund.org

SUSTAINABLE FOOD: SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Collaborative Fund	Private Equity	Collaborative Fund is a venture fund investing in seed and early stage businesses in the five areas of cities, money, consumer products and services, kids, and health.	New York, NY	collaborativefund.com
Finn Capital Partners	Private Equity	Finn Capital Partners is a venture capital fund that invests in early-stage businesses creating consumer products.	San Francisco, CA	finncapitalpartners.com
SoftMatter VC	Private Equity	SoftMatter VC is a seed stage venture capital fund that invests in sustainable food, fashion, and consumer good companies.	New York, NY	softmatter.vc
SOSV	Private Equity	SOSV is a venture capital fund and accelerator that invests in start-ups addressing global health, sustainable food systems, advanced manufacturing, and connectivity in the developing world and beyond.	Princeton, NJ	sosv.com

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Sweat Equities	Private Equity	Sweat Equities is an investment firm specializing in sustainable early-stage companies in the food and beverage consumer goods sectors.	Dallas, TX	sweatequitiesllc.com
The Organics ETF (ORG)	Public Equity	The Organics ETF (ORG) is a public equity Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) managed by Janus Henderson Investors. ORG corresponds to the performance of the Solactive Organics Index. It seeks exposure to companies that service, produce, distribute, market, or sell organic food, beverages, cosmetics, supplements, or packaging.	London, UK	en-us.janushenderson.com/advisor/product/org-the-organics-etf/#overview

SUSTAINABLE FOOD: CONVENTIONAL FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
AccelFoods Fund	Private Equity	AccelFoods is a venture fund that invests in early-stage food and beverage companies.	New York, NY	accelfoods.com
Avrio Capital	Private Equity	Avrio Capital is a venture capital fund that invests in early-stage companies that are helping secure food for future generations.	Canada	avriocapital.com
Boulder Food Group	Private Equity	Boulder Food Group is a venture capital fund that invests in early stage food and beverage consumer product companies making positive environmental and social contributions locally and globally.	Boulder, CO	bfgpartners.com
Branch Venture Group	Private Equity	Branch Venture Group is an angel network that provides funding and advice to early-stage companies in the food and beverage consumer packaged goods, food technology, and agriculture technology spaces.	Boston, MA	branchventuregroup.com
CAVU Venture Partners	Private Equity	CAVU Venture Partners is a consumer-focused venture capital fund that invests in branded food and beverage companies to change the consumer packaged goods marketplace for the better.	New York, NY	cavuventures.com
Cleveland Avenue	Private Equity	Cleveland Avenue is a Chicago-based Venture Fund and Accelerator investing in seed ventures, early stage and private equity deals focused on emerging restaurants, beverages, services, and technologies designed for foodservice and hospitality channels.	Chicago, IL	clevelandavenue.com
Cross Culture Ventures	Private Equity	Cross Culture Ventures is a venture capital fund that invests in entrepreneurs creating next generation technology and consumer products.	Culver City, CA	crossculturevc.com
First Round Capital	Private Equity	First Round Capital is a venture capital fund that invests in seed stage consumer, fintech, healthcare, hardware, and enterprise technology companies.	San Francisco, CA	firstround.com

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Food Angels	Private Equity	Food Angels is an angel network that invests in young food tech start-ups that are either in the product development phase or entering the market with market-ready products.	Heilbronn, Baden-Wurttembrg, Germany	food-angels.org
Greycroft Partners	Private Equity	Greycroft Partners is a venture capital fund that invests in internet and mobile start-ups working in the areas of data and AI, fintech, adtech, healthcare, retail, tech-enabled services, publishing, gaming, enterprise software, and technology.	New York, NY	greycroft.com
Halogen Ventures	Private Equity	Halogen Ventures is an early stage venture capital fund focused on female founded consumer technology companies.	Los Angeles, CA	halogenvc.com
Hyde Park Angels	Private Equity	Hyde Park Angels is an angel network that invests in seed, Series A, and Series B companies focused on digital media and technology, business and financial services, and consumer products and services.	Chicago, IL	hydeparkangels.com
Khosla Ventures	Private Equity	Khosla Ventures is a venture capital firm that focuses on environmentally friendly tech, internet, computing, mobile, and silicon tech.	San Francisco, CA	khoslaventures.com
Lerer Hippeau	Private Equity	Lerer Hippeau is an early-stage venture capital fund that invests in consumer, digital media, e-commerce, emerging tech, and enterprise software companies.	New York, NY	lererhippeau.com
M3 Ventures	Private Equity	M3 Ventures is a consumer venture capital fund that invests in seed and Series A companies in the lifestyle, e-commerce, health and fitness, green products, and organic food and beverage industries.	New York, NY	m3ventures.com
Maveron	Private Equity	Maveron is a venture capital fund that invests in seed and Series A consumer companies that directly engage, evangelize, and enchant customers.	San Francisco, CA and Seattle, WA	maveron.com
Next Seed	Private Debt	Next Seed is a crowdfunding platform that provides startups and consumer-facing brick-and-mortar businesses in the food and beverage, health and wellness, fitness, hospitality, and co-working industries access to flexible debt financing.	Houston, TX	nextseed.com
Revolution Growth	Private Equity	Revolution is a venture capital fund that invests in companies offering more choice, convenience, and control for both consumers and businesses. Revolution Growth invests in “speed-ups,” helping two to three technology-enabled businesses per year take ideas from niche to mass and scale to capitalize on huge market opportunities.	La Jolla CA	revolution.com/entity/growth

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Slow Ventures	Private Equity	Slow Ventures is a venture capital fund that invests in early-stage companies focused on consumer products, technology, biotechnology, and cryptocurrency.	San Francisco, CA	slow.co
Sunrise Strategic Partners	Private Equity	Sunrise Strategic Partners is a venture capital fund that invests in emerging brands in the healthy, active, and sustainable living spaces that resonate with millennials.	Boulder, CO	sunrisestrategicpartners.com

OTHER CREATIVE BUSINESSES: IMPACT FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
AccelFoods Fund	Private Equity	AccelFoods is a venture fund that invests in early-stage food and beverage companies.	New York, NY	accelfoods.com
Backstage Capital	Private Equity	Backstage Capital is a venture capital fund that invests in early stage companies led by underrepresented founders across a diverse range of industries including ethical fashion and media.	Los Angeles, CA	backstagecapital.com
Camelback Ventures	Private Equity	Camelback Ventures is an accelerator that provides capital to education ventures lead by underrepresented entrepreneurs to improve educational outcomes for students and create opportunities in low-income communities.	New Orleans, LA	camelbackventures.org
Cincinnati Development Fund	Private Debt	Cincinnati Development Fund is a CDFI that provides funding for residential, commercial, creative place making, and healthy food facility projects to strengthen low-income neighborhoods and improve lives.	Cincinnati, OH	cindevfund.org
Colorado Enterprise Fund	Private Debt	Colorado Enterprise Fund is a CDFI that finances start-ups and small businesses in the manufacturing, retail, and whole sale trades that are unable to secure traditional bank financing.	Denver, CO	coloradoenterprisefund.org
Community Investment Management - CIM Enterprise Loan Fund, L.P.	Private Debt	Community Investment Management is an impact investing firm that finances small businesses in partnership with technology-driven marketplace lenders to offer borrowers responsible and transparent loan terms.	San Francisco, CA	cim-llc.com
Craft3	Private Debt	Craft3 is a CDFI that provides small business, nonprofit, clean energy, and conservation loans to strengthen businesses, families, and the environment.	Oregon and Washington	craft3.org
Exponential Creativity Ventures	Private Equity	Exponential Creativity Ventures is a venture capital fund that makes early-stage investments in startups inventing technology to maximize human creative potential	New York, NY	exponentialcreativity.vc

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Global Partnerships	Private Debt & Equity	Global Partnerships makes loans and early stage equity investments in social enterprises that serve people living in poverty in developing countries throughout Latin America, the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa.	Seattle, WA	globalpartnerships.org
Impact Engine	Private Equity	Impact Engine is an Impact Venture Fund that invests in businesses focusing on the areas of economic empowerment, education, health, and resource efficiency to create social and environment impact.	Chicago, IL	theimpactengine.com
Investors' Circle-Social Venture Network (IC-SVN)	Private Equity	Investors' Circle is an impact angel network investing in early stage companies that are dedicated to improving the environment, education, health, and community.	Durham, NC	investorscircle.net
Kapor Capital	Private Equity	Kapor Capital invests in seed and early stage startups that solve real world problems in the fields of education, finance, health, work, and justice.	Oakland, CA	kaporcapital.com
Natural Capital Investment Fund	Private Debt	Natural Capital Investment Fund is a small business loan fund that supports entrepreneurs who are creating jobs and businesses in underserved communities in central Appalachia and the Southeast.	Shepherdstown, WV	ncifund.org
Nesta Arts Impact Fund I	Private Debt	Nesta is a global innovation foundation that invests in ideas that tackle the big challenges of our time in the areas of health, education, the creative economy, arts and culture, government innovation, and innovation policy. Nesta Arts Impact Fund I invested in arts organizations in the U.K. that can show social impact in the areas of youth and education attainment, citizen and community, and health and well-being.	London, UK	artsimpactfund.org
Purpose Ventures	Private Equity	Purpose Ventures invests in steward-owned startups and larger companies working in a broad range of areas including digital media and technology.	Basel, Switzerland Berlin, Germany	purpose.capital/en
Quotidian Ventures	Private Equity	Quotidian Ventures is a pre-seed venture capital fund that invests in companies using technology to transform large, existing industries.	New York, NY	quotidian.co
Rethink Impact	Private Equity	Rethink Impact is a venture capital fund that invests in women-led companies using technology to generate positive impact in the areas of health, education, sustainability, and economic empowerment.	DC, NY and SF	rethinkimpact.com
RSF Social Finance	Private Debt	RSF Social Finance is a nonprofit social finance organization that offers investing, lending and giving services to those who are committed to improving society and the environment.	San Francisco, CA	rsfsocialfinance.org
The Progress Fund	Private Debt	The Progress Fund is a CDFI that provides financing to people who are starting, expanding, or buying small businesses.	Greensburg, PA	progressfund.org

OTHER CREATIVE BUSINESSES: SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Heva Growth Fund	Private Debt	Heva Fund invests in the transformative social and economic potential of the creative economy sector in the East African region. The Growth Fund is a complementary facility alongside the existing early stage finance fund that provides working capital, asset financing, supply chain finance, capital investment, and follow on financing up to KES 30,000,000.	Nairobi, Kenya	hevafund.com
Heva Start-up Fund	Private Debt & Equity	Heva Fund invests in the transformative social and economic potential of the creative economy sector in the East African region. The start-up fund assists businesses increase their production capacities, launch new product lines, invest in new technology, or expand their distribution networks as a runway to investor readiness. Businesses undertaking their first applications can receive up to KES 1,000,000 in flexible debt, and a tailored package of up to KES 10,000,000 in subsequent applications.	Nairobi, Kenya	hevafund.com
SoftMatter VC	Private Equity	SoftMatter VC is a seed stage venture capital fund that invests in sustainable food, fashion, and consumer good companies.	New York, NY	softmatter.vc

OTHER CREATIVE BUSINESSES: CONVENTIONAL FUNDS

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Alsop Louie Partners	Private Equity	Alsop Louie Partners is an early-stage, risk-oriented technology venture capital firm.	San Francisco, CA	alsop-louie.com
bMuse	Private Equity	bMuse is a venture builder for early-stage companies primarily in the media industry.	New York, NY	bmuse.com
Designer Fund	Private Equity	Designer Fund invests in start-ups co-founded by designers to improve user experience in markets including financial services, business tools, and digital health.	San Francisco, CA	designerfund.com
Edge Creative Enterprise Fund	Private Equity	Edge is a venture capital fund that invests in early stage companies at the intersection of creativity and technology spanning across areas including computer gaming, fashion, artificial intelligence, and virtual and augmented reality. Edge Creative Enterprise Fund backs fast growing and revenue generating small and medium-sized creative companies that have core intellectual property which can be scaled.	London, UK	edge.uk.com/edge-creative-enterprise-fund
FG Angels	Private Equity	FG Angels is an angel network that invests in seed and early-stage information technology companies that fit in one of the five themes: Human computer interaction, protocol, adhesive, glue, market place, and distribution.	Boulder, CO	angel.co/fg-angels/syndicate

Fund Name	Asset Class	Description	HQ Location	Website
Halogen Ventures	Private Equity	Halogen Ventures is an early stage venture capital fund focused on female founded consumer technology companies.	Los Angeles, CA	halogenvc.com
Next Seed	Private Debt	Next Seed is a crowdfunding platform that provides startups and consumer-facing brick-and-mortar businesses in the food and beverage, health and wellness, fitness, hospitality, and co-working industries access to flexible debt financing.	Houston, TX	nextseed.com
Scout Ventures	Private Equity	Scout Ventures is a venture capital fund that invests in frontier technology startups focusing on areas that include AR/VR, robotics, cybersecurity, and enterprise SaaS.	New York, NY	scoutventures.com
Station 12 Media, Entertainment and Knowledge Fund	Private Equity	Station 12 Media, Entertainment and Knowledge Fund is a venture capital fund that invests in early-stage media, entertainment, and knowledge companies specializing in live events, music, marketing services, theatre, audio visual content, knowledge and education, virtual reality, and immersive technology.	London, UK	station12.co
Sun Mountain Capital	Private Equity	Sun Mountain Capital is a venture capital fund that invests in seed and startup companies across multiple sectors. Investment strategies include both direct investment and fund of funds programs spanning venture capital, mezzanine debt and growth equity.	Santa Fe, NM	sunmountaincapital.com

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was authored by Bonny Moellenbrock, Julien Gafarou and Laura Callanan.

Thank you to the following individuals who shared valuable insights for this study:

Divya Chaudhary, Flat World Partners
Cathy Clark, Fuqua School of Business, Duke University
Jed Emerson, Blended Value
Dennis Price, ImpactAlpha
Drew Tulchin, Meow Wolf

The study's research was led by Julien Gafarou with support from Sarah Freeman and Nicole Lau. Students from New York University Stern School of Business and Wagner Graduate School of Public Service made substantial contributions to the research.

Keith Anto	Eliza French	Kristie Nguyen
Chris Blackett	Jamison Friedland	Erin Pierson
Ben Broderick	Emily Hirsh	William Pitt
Gabriela Carrasco	Serena Hu	Oleksandra Plyska
Leslie Chao	Rachel Landau	Carrie Salmon
Amy Chen	Sharon Luo	Eric Schwartz
Denise Chou	Kiran Lutfeali	Jacqueline Tubbs
Brendan Culliton	Aditi Luthra	Zuowen Wei
Grace Earle	Tom Miller	

UPSTART CO-LAB ADVISORY BOARD

Cathy Clark, Director of CASE i3, Fuqua School of Business, Duke University
Jed Emerson, Founder, Blended Value
Jonathan Law, Partner, McKinsey & Company
Will Rosenzweig, Co-founder and Managing Partner, Physic Ventures
Surita Sandosham, Executive Director, Heartland Alliance International
Andrew Stern, Founder and Executive Director, Global Development Incubator
Dennis Whittle, CEO, Feedback Labs

UPSTART CO-LAB TEAM

Laura Callanan, Founding Partner
Julien Gafarou, Senior Associate
Shelley Hoy, Fellow
Nam Phuong Doan, Program Administrator
Ward Wolff, Senior Associate

