

# EPIC CAPITAL

A Good Life Well Lived.™

## IMPACT

## Investing in Agreement with *Your* Beliefs

*The case for aligning your portfolio with your outlook & worldview.*



**Do your investment choices reflect your outlook?** Are they in agreement with your values? These questions may seem rather deep when it comes to deciding what to buy or sell, but some great investors have built fortunes by investing according to the ethical, moral, and spiritual tenets that guide their lives.

**Sir John Templeton stands out as an example.** Born and raised in a small Tennessee town, he became one of the world's richest men and most respected philanthropists. Templeton maintained a lifelong curiosity about science, religion, economics, and world cultures – and it led him to notice opportunities in emerging industries and emerging markets (like Japan) that other investors missed. Believing that “every successful entrepreneur is a servant,” he invested in companies that did no harm and which reflected his conviction that “success is a process of continually seeking answers to new questions.”<sup>1</sup>

Among Templeton's more famous maxims was the comment, “Invest, don't trade or speculate.” Having endured the Great Depression as a youth, he had a knack for spotting irrational exuberance.<sup>2,3</sup>

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As the 1990s drew to a close, he correctly forecast 90% of internet companies would have financial difficulties within five years. In 2003, he warned investors of a housing bubble that would soon burst; in 2005, he predicted a huge stock market downturn. To Templeton, a rally or an investment opportunity had to have sound fundamentals; if it lacked them, it was dangerous.<sup>3,4</sup>

**Warren Buffett leaps to mind as another example.** The “Oracle of Omaha” is worth \$82.8 billion – yet he still lives in the same house he bought for \$31,500 in 1958, and prefers cheeseburgers and Cherry Coke to champagne or caviar. He was born to an influential family (his father served in Congress), but he has maintained humility through the decades.<sup>5,6</sup>

Money manager Guy Spier dined with Buffett in 2008 at one of the billionaire’s annual charity lunches, and in his book *The Education of a Value Investor* (co-written with *TIME* correspondent William Green), he shares a key piece of advice Buffett gave him that day: “It’s very important always to live your life by an inner scorecard, not an outer scorecard.” In other words, act and invest in such a way that you can hold your head high, so that you are staying true to your values and not engaging in behavior that conflicts with your morals and beliefs.<sup>6</sup>

Buffett has also cited the need to be truthful with yourself about your strengths, weaknesses, and capabilities – as you invest, you should not be swayed from your core beliefs to embrace something that you find mysterious. “You have to stick within what I call your circle of competence. You have to know what you understand and what you don’t understand. It’s not terribly important how big the circle is. But it’s terribly important that you know where the perimeter is.”<sup>6</sup>

Speaking to a college class in Georgia, he cited the real reward for a life well lived: “When you get to my age, you’ll really measure your success in life by how many of the people you want to have love you actually do love you. I know people who have a lot of money, and they get testimonial dinners and they get hospital wings named after them. But the truth is that nobody in the world loves them. If you get to my age in life and nobody thinks well of you, I don’t care how big your bank account is, your life is a disaster.”<sup>6</sup>

Not every deal Buffett has made has been perfect, but he’s happy to acknowledge missteps and treat them as learning experiences. That unpretentiousness may be part of his mystique.<sup>7</sup>

Values and beliefs helped guide Templeton and Buffett to success in the markets, in business, and in life. For all the opportunities they seized, and ups and downs they faced, their legacy will be that of humble and value-centered individuals who knew what mattered most.

**Today, socially responsible investing is more widespread than ever.** Investors who want their portfolios to better reflect their beliefs and values often turn to “socially responsible” investments – or alternately, “impact” investments, which respond to environmental issues, women’s rights issues, and other pressing societal concerns. The Global Impact Investors Network investigated impact investing in their annual survey. Respondents reported they held \$228 billion in impact investment assets, nearly twice that reported in the previous year. This speaks to the growing popularity of impact investing. Working with a financial professional may help in balancing your values with a deeper understanding of the market.<sup>8</sup>

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# Acumen and Grameen Impact Launch A Pioneering SDG Impact Bond for Livelihoods

*Published by Impact Alpha June 3, 2019*



**The vision is to use impact investing innovation to catalyze skilling and job creation.**

June 3, 2019 – Mumbai, India – India’s first Sustainable Development Goals Bond (SDG Bond) for ‘for-profit’ social enterprises was announced today by Grameen Impact Investments India (Grameen Impact) and Acumen. The LIFE SDG Bond has provided a credit facility for INR 100M to a pool of Workforce Development Social Enterprises (SEs) – **LabourNet, Empower Pragati, Edubridge, iSTAR, and iPRIMED**, to enable sustainable livelihoods for youth in the rural and urban areas. LIFE SDG Bond envisions to present a successful workable financial structure to private investors, corporates as well as the government to shift the credit facility assessment for such enterprises from being only a risk-based assessment model to an impact-based assessment model that can be incentivized.

The Bond is expected to train and up-skill ~20,000 youth, with the goal of creating employment for at least 70% of the trained youth, and propel India towards achieving SDG #8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth), while also providing significant positive impact to SDGs # 1, 10, and 17 (No Poverty, Reduced Inequalities, and Partnerships for Goals).

Royston Braganza, CEO of Grameen Impact, while announcing the SDG Bond said, “Humbled to announce our second SDG Impact Bond with a strong focus on youth and economic empowerment – while also being the first impact bond in the world to focus on multiple for-profit social enterprises wrapped into a single pay-for-results instrument. Delighted to partner with 5 stellar skill development companies across the country to cover over 20,000 youth. Grateful to Acumen Fund for their belief in us.”

Mahesh Yagnaraman, India Country Director, Acumen said, “This is the first of its kind outcomes-based funding model in the world for a for-profit enterprise which will focus on impact outcomes as part of the debt financing structure. We are excited to partner with Grameen to amplify the impact of skill development organizations. Our end goal is to draw more support and capital – from government, industry and philanthropy – towards outcome-funded instruments that can catalyze development in this area.”

This is the second SDG Bond launched by Grameen Impact under its GOAL series. The first one titled WHEEL (Women Holistic Empowerment and Enhanced Livelihood) SDG Bond in collaboration with ChildFund India will help 2,000 marginalized tribal women in Maharashtra and MP to become self-reliant by training them to become poultry farmers and positively impact SDG #5 (Gender Equality) and SDG#8 (Decent work). Acumen has been investing in Social enterprises and leaders for over 15 years. Acumen has invested in skilling enterprises as part of its focus area of Workforce Development and this collaboration with Grameen is to foster newer innovative financial structures and instruments to help build the ecosystem in the area.

### **About Acumen**

Acumen raises philanthropic funds to invest patient capital in business models that deliver critical goods and services to the world’s poor. Since 2001, Acumen has improved the lives of millions by investing in companies and entrepreneurs providing agricultural inputs, quality education, clean energy, healthcare services, formal housing, safe drinking water, and sanitation services to low-income customers in India, Pakistan, East Africa, West Africa, and Latin America.

### **About Grameen Impact Investments India Pvt. Ltd.**

Grameen Impact India (GIII) is an RBI registered NBFC focused on lending to social enterprises engaged with an emphasis on double bottom line returns – financial returns along with demonstrated social impact. GIII lends selectively to high-quality social enterprises across stages from early, growth to mature entities.

The lending focus is on impact enterprises in financial services, affordable education and skill development, affordable healthcare, agriculture and clean energy sectors. GIII’s goal is to catalyze access to debt capital critical to scaling up social enterprises and help them reach the poor and excluded population.

GIII is promoted by Grameen Capital India (GCI) which was globally the first social investment bank set up as a Social Business following the 7 principles of Nobel Laureate Prof. Yunus. Over the last decade, GCI has helped complete 25+ transactions in excess of \$160M for social businesses in India. GIII also counts marquee names from the Indian corporate world and leading global impact funds as its investors.

# Adobe, Pantone Launch Custom Colors to Inspire Ocean Conservation, Climate Action

Published by Sustainable Brands June 3, 2019



*The “Glowing Glowing Gone” campaign advocates for action for coral reef conservation by highlighting the global danger signaled by fluorescing corals.*

Today, **The Ocean Agency** unveiled “Glowing Glowing Gone” — a global campaign advocating for greater funding and action for coral reef conservation by highlighting the global danger signaled by fluorescing corals. The campaign is based around colors specially developed by the **Pantone Color Institute** and **Adobe**, using new technology.

In 2016, a team from The Ocean Agency photographed one of the most spectacular and rarest sights in nature while filming the **Netflix** original documentary, *Chasing Coral*. A coral reef situated in **New Caledonia** was “glowing” in incredibly rare, vivid colors due to an underwater heatwave; the corals were producing brightly colored chemicals that act as sunscreen in a desperate bid to survive the fatally high water temperatures. This glowing coral phenomenon, called fluorescing, is one of the most visual indicators of the climate crisis and the existential threat to entire ecosystems such as coral reefs. However, until now, it has gone largely unnoticed.

The campaign, developed by The Ocean Agency — in collaboration with leading ocean conservation organizations including the **International Coral Reef Initiative**, **UN Environment** and the **Paul G. Allen Family Foundation** — seeks to garner and visually showcase popular support for coral reef conservation, especially in the lead-up to key government decision-making conferences in 2020 regarding protecting biodiversity. Adding to the recent **IPBES** report, the collapse of coral reefs would represent one of the greatest single losses of global biodiversity.

“The future of the world’s coral reefs hangs in the balance, threatening both marine life and hundreds of millions of people who rely on them for food, livelihoods and coastal protection,” says UN Environment coral reef

expert **Gabriel Grimsditch**. “We urgently need to sharpen global attention to the crisis facing corals if we, as a global community, are to prevent the loss of one of the world’s major ecosystems.”

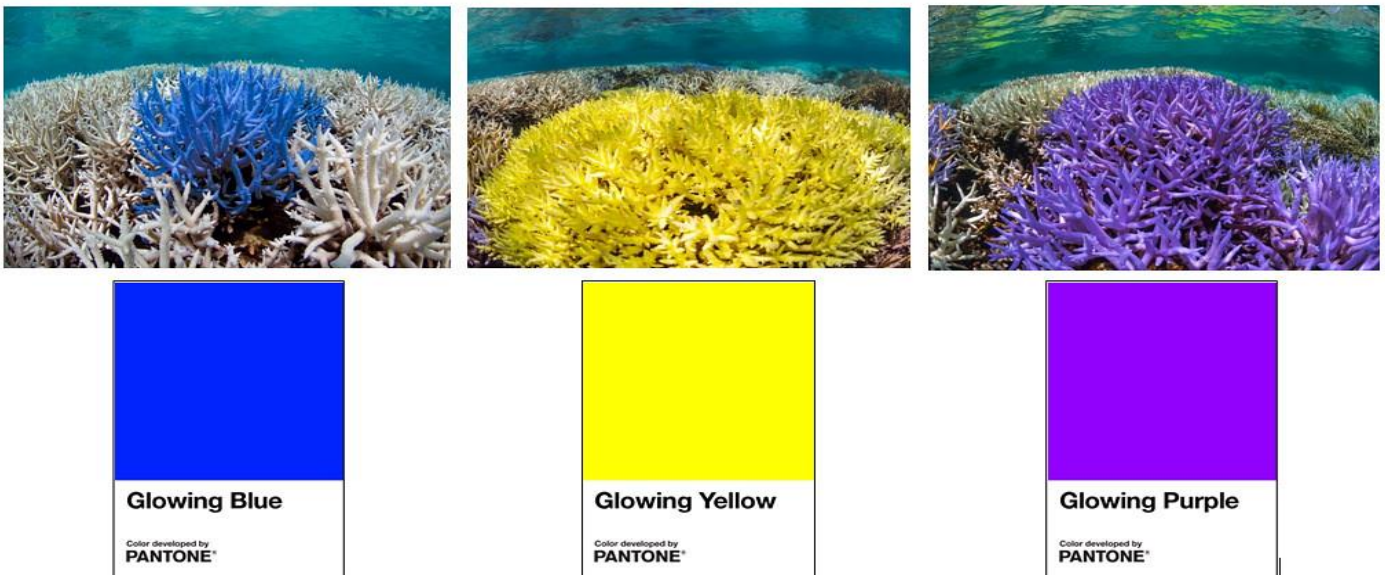
### Why coral reefs are so important

Coral reefs all around the world are extremely vulnerable to ocean warming, climatic changes and ocean acidification, and they need to be protected from additional anthropogenic stressors such as pollution, overfishing and uncontrolled coastal development to give them the best chance of survival. With 93 percent of climate-change heat absorbed by the upper ocean, coral reefs are firmly on the frontline of the climate crisis. In the last 30 years, we’ve lost over half of the world’s live coral, and the outlook is only getting worse. Corals are a foundation species, so when they die, the whole ecosystem can collapse — an ecosystem that supports 1 billion people, 1 million species and a quarter of all ocean life; and has an estimated value of \$375 billion per year.

**Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** scientists predict we can now only save 10-30 percent of remaining coral reefs (those least vulnerable to the climate crisis) due to heat already in the system. To save coral reefs, there needs to be urgent targeted action and investment to protect them from other issues such as pollution and overfishing — especially the reefs that are least vulnerable to the climate crisis that have the best chance of surviving.

There is increasing awareness that when corals are subjected to prolonged heatwaves caused by the climate crisis, they often turn white and die (a process known as bleaching). Coral fluorescing, when corals ‘glow’ in vivid colors during the bleaching process, is far less common, and far less well known and understood.

**Ocean warming** is now the biggest environmental issue facing coral reefs. The ocean is as complex and fragile as the human body, and just a small increase in temperature leads to vital systems shutting down. Glowing corals are the indicator of system shutdown — it’s the ocean’s ultimate warning.



For the Glowing Glowing Gone campaign, the Pantone Color Institute and Adobe Color used new technology to identify the exact colors of coral fluorescence, using the imagery on Adobe Stock taken by The Ocean Agency in New Caledonia, and have developed three new Pantone “Glowing” coral colors. **Glowing Yellow, Glowing**

**Blue and Glowing Purple** will be used as the visual cornerstone to the long-term campaign, which aims to involve brands and the creative community in raising global awareness of the coral reef crisis and advocating for greater conservation action.

“These Glowing colors are the ultimate visual indicator that we have reached a tipping point, not just for coral reefs, but for the planet,” says **Richard Vevers**, CEO and founder of The Ocean Agency. “For the first time in human history, we are on the verge of losing a major planetary ecosystem, and only urgent global action on a local and global level will prevent this from happening.”

The announcement of the colors comes after **PANTONE 16-1546, Living Coral** was selected to be Pantone’s Color of the Year for 2019 and kicks off Pantone and Adobe’s support of “Glowing, Glowing, Gone.”

Pantone Color Institute VP **Laurie Pressman** says: “Top of our thinking for the selection of our Pantone Color of the Year 2019, Living Coral, was the arresting beauty we see in nature and the importance of the preservation of our environment. Living Coral is naturally exquisite — but ironically, it is the illuminating glow radiating from the dying coral that is demanding our attention. It is as if the corals are sending a color-coded SOS that says, ‘Please look at me; I need you to notice before I slip away.’ In that sense, these incredibly vibrant colors could be considered the colors of the climate crisis.”

### **The role of brands**

The Adobe Stock 2019 Visual Trend “Brand Stand” identified that brands are no longer just interested in getting involved in causes, but are now actively taking action to drive movements. These “Brand Stands” are rapidly leading to conservation action, as demonstrated by continued brand involvement in initiatives to help solve the ocean plastics crisis.

“Adobe believes that how we perceive important issues in our culture, environment and future starts with how creatives visually bring these topics to the public eye,” says Adobe Stock Senior Director of Content, **Brianna Wettlaufer**. “Colors can become synonymous with important topics and create a connection, not just in a literal sense of discussion, but also in the way brands play a part in the conversation — similarly to the way pink has become emblematic of breast cancer research support. Adobe is proud to join forces with The Ocean Agency and Pantone to promote the importance and health of our oceans and their delicate ecosystems, and of paying immediate attention to the colorful warning signs coral reefs are showing us.”

### **A challenge to creatives**

“Glowing Glowing Gone” starts with a challenge for the creative community to use the new range of Glowing colors to create attention-grabbing art and designs that raise awareness of glowing corals and the warning they represent. The art and designs will be promoted to inspire global support for action and showcased at key environment decision-making events. More details of the challenge, launching today, can be found at [www.glowing.org](http://www.glowing.org).

# Latin American Leaders Commit to Forge Inclusive Digital Future for All

*Published by Sustainable Brands September 14, 2018*



On Thursday, **Dr. Victor Santiago Pineda** — a globally recognized disability rights expert, President of **World Enabled** and Director of the **Inclusive Cities Lab** at the **University of California Berkeley** — shared his vision for socially inclusive, smart cities of the future in a keynote address at the **Smart City Expo LATAM Congress 2018** in Puebla, Mexico.

**Smart Cities for All**, a joint project of the **Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict)** and World Enabled, estimates that most smart cities today are making the digital divide for persons with disabilities worse, not better. Pineda and **James Thurston**, G3ict VP for Global Strategy and Development, work with leaders and communities across Latin America and the world to ensure that smart city programs and technology investments do not leave behind persons with disabilities.

As Pineda has pointed out, “People with disabilities form part of every community, and rapid urbanization in Latin America requires cities to deploy technologies to improve the lives of persons with disabilities and older persons.”

Mayor **Mauricio Rodas** of **Quito, Ecuador** said in a statement: “Quito was the first city in Latin America to contribute to the Smart Cities for All Toolkit. As Mayor, I am committed to deploying technology solutions for human needs, solutions that align with the **Sustainable Development Goals**.”

The Smart Cities for All Global Initiative is collaborating with the **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)** to ensure that the **Regional Action Plan for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda** responds to the needs of persons with disabilities and older persons.



Next month, Smart Cities for All will join over 40 urban development ministers at the **Annual Assembly of Ministers and Highest Authorities in Housing and Urban Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI)** in Buenos Aires, supported by the **World Bank, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC)** and UN-Habitat's **Regional Office of Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC)**.

“We are proud to work with Smart Cities for All to enhance inclusion and accessibility in Latin American cities,” said **Elkin Velasquez**, Regional Director of UN-Habitat ROLAC. “We want to integrate the concept of universal design into the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.”

### **Tools for accessible and inclusive smart cities**

“We launched the Smart Cities for All Global Initiative to help cities leverage technology, including new and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and augmented reality, to close the digital divide for persons with disabilities and older persons,” Thurston said. “We are partnering with industry, government and disability organizations to create tools and a knowledge base that help ensure the digital transformation of cities leads to greater inclusion.”

The **Smart Cities for All Digital Inclusion Toolkit** is now available in 10 languages — **Spanish, Portuguese, English, Arabic, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Hebrew, French and Marathi**. It includes tools to help guide city technology investments and assess and benchmark a city's digital inclusion.

“Thousands of city leaders in hundreds of cities now have access to critical tools in their native languages and according to their needs,” Pineda said. “We are proud of our partnerships with leading global stakeholders and networks to quickly get these critical tools in the hands of key decision makers today.”

## **Impact in the News**



### **- Chilean vegan foodtech venture NotCo launches in Argentina**

Following a \$30 million investment from London's The Craftory and Jeff Bezos' venture fund as well as its recent partnership with Brazil's Grupo Pao de Acuar, Chilean foodtech company NotCo is planning to launch in Argentina.

### **- Cloud-based waste management startup Recykal raises \$2M in Pre-Series A**

Hyderabad-based Recykal will use the funds to strengthen its tech offerings and expand its team in new cities across India. The digital technology platform connects waste generators (businesses and consumers) with waste aggregators and recyclers, facilitating transactions and offering visibility, transparency, and traceability of waste.

### **- Acumen and Grameen Impact launch a pioneering SDG impact bond for livelihoods**

The chain of 6 fast-casual restaurants in Los Angeles area uses variable pricing to make healthy food more affordable in low-income neighborhoods. The Kellogg Foundation is backing EveryTable with \$1.5 million program-related investment and plan to help open 2 more stores in 2019 as well as create a franchise model for entrepreneurs of color.

# E3 = Epic Time, Talent & Treasure

Epic Capital is a mission-driven firm with a genuine heart for community, both locally and around the world. We focus specifically on social outreach initiatives. We give our time, talent and treasure to organizations that support families in need, the working poor, homeless or impoverished. This is meaningful to us because we recognize the incredible blessings in our lives and the opportunities that we have been given to do work that we love. So we have taken our personal passion for empowering others and made it a part of our corporate charter. We call it **E3**.

- We give **our time** through our quarterly *Epic Outreach* program, serving where the greatest needs are through local charities.
- We give **our talent** through our *Epic-EDU* program, in addition to our partnership with [CommonWealth Charlotte](#), administering financial workshops for organizations and churches that minister to low income families, the working poor and the previously incarcerated.
- And we give **our treasure** through our *Epic Impact Grant* program to local community and global organizations that meet our social outreach criteria.

We believe that we are all called to serve. We also believe that the positive impact one can make by empowering the life of another can alter the direction of that life forever.

We are pleased to announce that we have opened up our quarterly Epic Outreach initiatives to include volunteer participation from clients of Epic Capital. Please consider joining us during one of our upcoming volunteer efforts.



## CharMeck Adopt-a-Stream Clean – Q2 2019

The #BeEPIC Team was at it again. And we are happy to report a much improved stretch of Little Sugar Creek waterway! Despite having pulled about a full bag and a half of debris from the water and its surrounding banks, it was the least amount that we've seen since we started volunteering over a year ago. The primary culprits, as we've seen in the past, consist primarily of disposable plastic grocery store bags, styrofoam cups and take-out containers, aluminum cans, bottles, and foil snack bags. Some of the more unique items today were tattered clothes, a decomposed backpack, a softball, and a basketball. But there was some beauty among

the discarded, as we saw flowers blooming, bees buzzing, and a few geese going about their day. Not to mention the sun was blazing and it was HOT! All worth it as we recognized the value of our efforts in seeing our little strip look pretty clean and alive with wildlife. If you'd like to consider volunteering with us please let us know. If you'd like to learn more please visit [Storm Water Services Adopt-a-Stream Program](#)



If you would like to consider other volunteer opportunities, or to learn more about over 400 local non-profits in the Charlotte region, please visit a community partner of ours who we hold in very high regard: **Share Charlotte** <https://sharecharlotte.org/>

# EPIC CAPITAL

Everyone Has a Story, Let Your Legacy Tell Yours™

**IMPACT**

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Questions, comments, and inquiries are welcome: [info@EpicCapital.com](mailto:info@EpicCapital.com)

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