2023 ESG Report Celebrating Diverse & Dynamic Workforces





# // Hastings



# 1 Summary of Hastings

Performed capital partner, Hastings Equity Partners is a lower middle-market private equity firm. Hastings invests first institutional capital in North American founder-led companies within the industrial and business services sectors, where it has deep operating and investing experience. As a preferred capital partner, Hastings seeks to empower businesses to reach their full potential. For two decades, the firm has formed long-term partnerships with entrepreneurs while utilizing a hands-on approach to help optimize operations, accelerate revenue growth, and significantly increase equity value.

There are four members of the senior management team, Joe Conlon, Ted Patton, Grant Reckhow, and Katrina Starr-Frederick, who on average, have worked together at Hastings for 15 years and have executed a consistent investment strategy focused on founder-led, owner-operated businesses. The broader Hastings team combines experience at Hastings with diverse backgrounds across private equity, operations, strategy consulting, investor relations, management, and finance. Hastings is headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts.



2023 ESG Report

# **Hastings** Overview

Investing exclusively in **lower middle-market** companies

Partnering with founders, providing **first institutional capital** 

Hands on approach to **accelerate growth** and create **sustained value** 

**Targeting** North American business services and industrial companies

Senior team averages **11 years** at Hastings

Full Hastings team comprises 13 dedicated professionals

Proprietary sourcing funnel, with over **2,700 deals** sourced per year

**Over 70 unique investments** across five funds

Strong focus on **employee wellbeing** and **safety** across our portfolio

Adherence, commitment, and implementation of **ESG principles** 



# 2 Letter from Joe & Hed

"Across our portfolio companies, we are proud to support and partner with businesses that employ workers from a range of backgrounds and walks of life. These businesses take an employee-centric approach to their operations and the role of employees is central to every transaction at Hastings."



Joe Conlon **Managing Director** 



**Ted Patton Managing Director** 

The theme of this year's report is celebrating diverse and dynamic workforces. From supporting founders and collaborating with management teams, to establishing boards, building out team capabilities and protecting workers, Hastings believes that in order to build successful businesses, we need to do right by the people, whatever their background or identity.

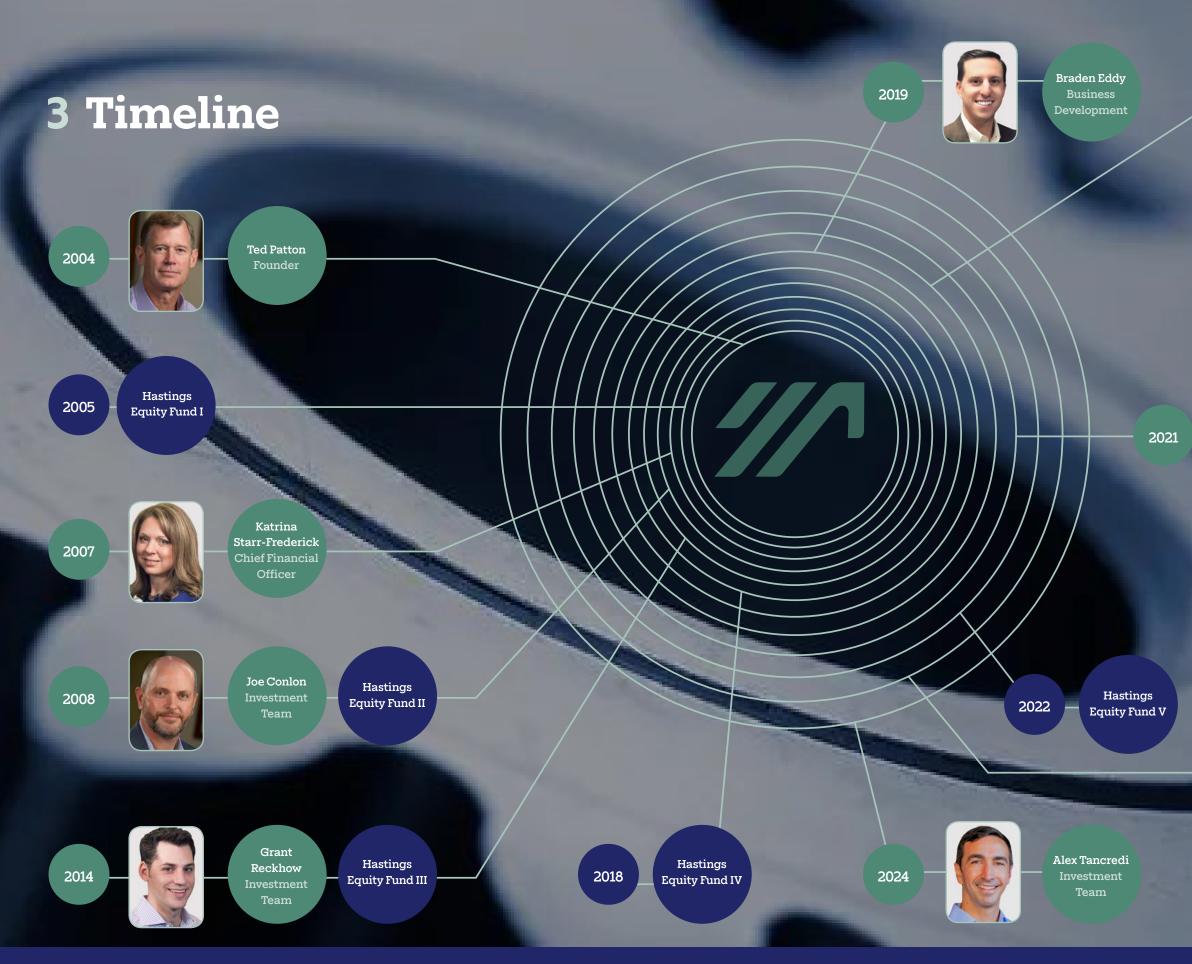
Thank you for taking the time to read our ESG report for 2023. We look forward to our continued dialogue and engagement on ESG with all our investors and stakeholders.

### 2023 ESG Report

pleased to be publishing our third formal ESG report covering our ESG updates for the 2023 calendar year. Producing these reports offers us the chance to reflect on the role ESG plays in both our portfolio and our business. It holds us accountable to the commitments we make in our ESG policies and practices to ensure that ESG is appropriately factored into to everything we do. As illustrated in the portfolio company case studies provided throughout the report, there are a range of ESG initiatives and activities at the portfoliolevel that we are proud to highlight. Alongside the case studies, we also take the opportunity to outline the results of our ESG portfolio company scorecards compiled by our dedicated ESG consultant, WAP Sustainability.

Diverse and dynamic workforces are key characteristics of strong, sustainable, and healthy businesses. As we celebrate our 20th year anniversary, more than ever do we recognize how a diverse workforce and inclusive culture makes businesses more attractive places to work, as well as helping to promote the wellbeing, creativity, and productivity of all employees. Over the past 20 years, we have invested in over 70 portfolio companies across five funds and produced solid returns for our investors through numerous economic cycles. Even during difficult periods, we have prioritized our people both at our portfolio companies and at Hastings. Internally, we also recognize that we also need to build and maintain a diverse and dynamic workforce, and we are proud of the steps we have taken, and continue to take, to promote this across the team.







### 2020







Kathryn Viotto Investment Team

Barrett Lauer Business Development

Marcie Burns Accounting & Office Manager



Eliza Oshana McGrath Investor Relations



Amir Parikh Investment Team



Jill Meyler Controller

2023





Ryan Ferland Investment Team

Eleanor Balke Business Development



# 4 Our Commitment to ESG

astings is a private equity partner that focuses on founder-led, lower-middle market businesses that are positioned for rapid growth. As an institutional investor, Hastings has a duty to act in the best long-term interests of its clients.

In our role, we believe that ESG issues can affect the performance of our investment portfolios, and therefore, it is in our best interest to manage and implement ESG initiatives for both new and existing investments. ESG is not an afterthought at Hastings – it is a guiding principle. Our mission is to have every investment, strategic and operational decision we make throughout the investment lifecycle contribute positively to all stakeholders, including employees, shareholders, the environment, and society at large.

## **ESG Policy Overview**

At Hastings, we recognize the importance of managing ESG considerations within our own operations and within our portfolio. As such, we are committed to advancing how we manage the ESG aspects of our portfolio companies and own operations. We believe that companies participating in ESG initiatives generate higher returns and we are committed to leveraging our financial resources in support of ESG to generate positive shareholder value.

The team is committed to responsible investments driven by positive outcomes for our partners, while ensuring enrichment of our employees, surrounding communities, and the environment. We employ consistent evaluation and tracking methodologies in order to establish reporting metrics for our portfolio companies. We have identified five core categories which we focus on when integrating ESG considerations, which includes establishing relevant KPIs for portfolio companies based on these assessments.

## **Five Core Integration Categories**

The core areas are fundamental to our business and the everyday decisions made in our portfolio companies. The core areas are rated on a scale from 1–5 and tracked as part of our continued management and accountability assessments for each of our portfolio companies during the evaluation period and throughout the life of an investment.



### **1. Environmental Awareness**

The environment is not something outside of us. It exists even within our smallest communities and affects each individual on an intimate level. Our awareness of environmental concerns from carbon impact to regulatory compliance – means we insist on commitment to environmental responsibility for all operations



### 2. Health & Safety

We want Hastings and its portfolio companies to go beyond compliance and find new ways to protect employee health and safety by providing the tools and resources portfolio companies need to responsibly enhance their processes.



### 5. Local & Community Impact

metrics.

Hastings expects all of its leaders, partners and employees to properly respect and support communities and local interests. We continually review and implement new practices as ESG best practices evolve.





### 3. Employee & Wages

Hastings aim to push each of its investments to lead their respective peer sets in promoting employee wellbeing and improving performance through strong diversity, equity, and inclusion ("DEI") focused



### 4. Governance & Business Ethics

Our organization has a legacy of ethical business management, governance and operations, and we expect the same from all our partners.



## Case Study Imperative

Imperative Chemical Partners ("Imperative") is an industrial services business focused on oilfield chemicals. It is a leading provider of specialty chemicals, chemical program management, laboratory services, and in-field technical support, primarily to operators and midstream companies in the most active shale plays in the United States.

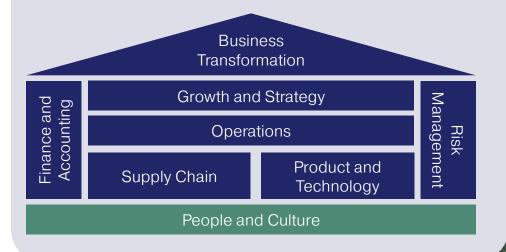
Imperative strives to set a new standard in chemical services with a focus on effective chemistries, bestin-class service, and proven program management – all coordinated and supported by an organization with the combined resources, experience and expertise to deliver exceptional results.

Imperative's focus on culture, stewardship, safety, and integrity is top- notch. The collective core values of the company are rooted around bringing the team together, working as one unit, and aligning firmwide goals with individual responsibilities. The company structure is a key differentiator and makes Imperative a unique and desirable partner to work with.

Imperative is proud of the significant positive impact and contribution it makes on a range of environmental factors. By treating new and existing wells with chemicals, Imperative provides better results for the wells that in turn also provides better results for the environment. Imperative recognises that it plays an important role in enabling more productive and efficient outcomes that can ultimately have a meaningful impact on the overall reduction of harm to the environment. The business recognizes the responsibility it has to its employees and customers, as well as the broader impact of its work in mitigating impacts and making a contribution to a better environment where possible.

### Dynamic, Innovative, Empowered: People First

The team at Imperative liken their structure to that of a house, with people and culture as the foundations, and reinforcing a family dynamic.







### 2023 ESG Report



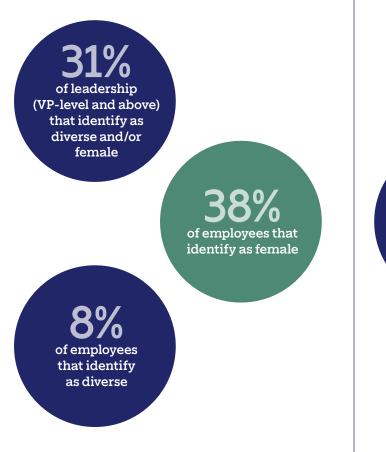
# **5** Our Commitment to **Diverse & Dynamic** Workforces

## **Firm-level**

The Hastings senior team is responsible for the firm's diversity. equality and inclusion ("DEI") initiatives. Hasting is proud of the gender diversity reflected across the firm, including the fact that four of the total ten senior professionals at Hastings (VP and up) are women. Hastings recognizes that a diverse workforce and inclusive culture makes the firm a more attractive place to work as well as promoting the wellbeing, creativity, and productivity of our employees.

## **Portfolio-level**

We continue to focus on this topic with an increased focus on DEI training at the management level. At Hastings, we recognize that, while the workforces of our portfolio companies are often diverse, the senior management and boards don't always reflect this. Through initiatives such as mentorship and training programs, we believe there are opportunities to further improve and promote diversity.









## **Second City Works**

included dedicated DEI training in Chicago hosted by Second City Works. This an approach to activating inclusive behaviors. The DEI space is constantly evolving as more and more reach on behavioral science becomes available. Second City

WORKS Works collaborates with top tier academic institutions, award-winning researchers

We are committed to promoting a culture within Hastings that celebrates all of our differences - whether race, ethnic heritage, gender, sexual orientation, cultural background, education, skills, physical and mental disabilities, age, or religious beliefs. We believe our differences make a significant contribution to our strengths as a team.

# **ESG** Repor



## **Case Study Community Tree Service**

Community Tree Service ("CTS") is a vegetation management provider to utilities and municipal government in California. Hastings acquired CTS in June 2022 and previously reported on initiatives undertaken at CTS to support local communities through the provision of essential services as well as good quality, high paying jobs.

CTS was founded in 2001 by Adolfo Garcia, who emigrated to the US and originally began working in the construction industry in order to support his family, focusing his work on tree trimming and landscaping. Promoting a diverse workforce and providing good jobs for community members has been central to the mission of CTS since inception. We continued this theme with our recent hire of **Josh Teves**, who joined as CEO from Patriot Environmental Services. Josh is also firmly committed to putting people at the heart of the business.

## Has the company impacted the local economy in any positive or negative way?

**Josh Teves:** Yes, we've increased employment over the years mainly to local people. Purchasing supplies and servicing our fleet to as many local small business as possible. Offering tree services to the community, for example local churches, etc.

# Has the company contributed to economic development in areas of high poverty (such as job opportunities, reinvestment, community donations)?

**JT:** Yes, Royal Oaks, CA is a relatively low income community. Keeping the yard here, employing locals, and shopping local has been a great opportunity for locals to get into a different industry than agricultural work.

## How has the company engaged with the local community?

**JT:** Through job fairs and partnering with the local at risk youth schools to present to them and setting up booths to show them what their career in the utility vegetation industry can be like. Additionally, in line with the community demographics, 100% of new hires in 2023 were non-white professionals.

Testimonials throughout the report are provided by Founders, Presidents, and CEOs of one or more of Hastings' portfolio companies. No compensation was paid by Hastings in connection with these endorsements.





"As I finish my time at Patriot after eight long years and start with CTS, let me tell you what I've learned about this business: it is all about the people. Systems and processes can be accelerants, but people are the engine. Invest in people. And like most things, it is quality over quantity. I'll take four quarters over 100 pennies any day!"

Josh Teves, CEO at CTS



# **7 ESG Approach:** Portfolio **Company-level**

### **Overview**

ESG considerations are a significant factor in our investment decision-

- Typically establishing the first board of directors at each business and staffing the boards with independent members who promote
- Providing the tools and resources needed to protect employee
- Providing upward mobility for all employees, including, on average



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WAP Sustainability partners with management teams to provide both technical and strategic competencies to create measurable change within client businesses. Current market expectations are that companies are actively engaged in measuring and tracking ESG indicators within their own operations while also demonstrating continual improvement.

Review.

The WAP Sustainability team is well versed in these expectations, and in creating policies, positions, requirements, reporting frameworks, and processes to help show progress on ESG. Working alongside WAP Sustainability, we have formalized a framework for measuring and reporting on our ESG policies across our core KPIs. This has also included identifying new initiatives and policy implementation across the portfolio, as well as creating ESG Ratings for our companies.

> Hastings' investment selection is based on comprehensive due diligence and a well-defined decision-making process. For every new investment we make, a main priority of ours is to analyze the safety culture of the company upfront. The diverse background and expertise of the team, coupled with a thorough investment review process, helps to ensure that information is analyzed from a variety of perspectives, which includes consideration of other relevant ESG factors which can be priced in accordingly.

> Our companies are generally too small to have an ESG program in place when we purchase them. Since we are primarily focused on both business service and field service companies, their carbon footprint is typically small so the focus during diligence is their safety history, employee attrition rates and general company culture. This gives us a sense for where they stand from an ESG perspective. Soon after we close on a transaction, we engage WAP Sustainability to conduct a full audit of the business and make recommendations for improvements.



## **ESG in the Diligence Process**

Both the Hastings Business Development team and Investment team are responsible for assessing ESG risks and opportunities during the due diligence process. Additionally, Hastings engages WAP Sustainability to help identify ESG risks and opportunities while also performing semi-annual assessments on all existing investments. WAP Sustainability conducts our portfolio company level analysis and scoring across our ESG policies and core KPIs, enabling us to track meaningful progress on ESG matters. These results ultimately feed into an annual ESG Program





## Portfolio **Scorecards Overview**

We are pleased to present the latest results from our 2023 ESG Program Review conducted by WAP Sustainability. The reviewing program seeks to determine material issues for our portfolio companies by reviewing the flow of information from each company. ESG data is requested and collected and then WAP Sustainability is able to report ESG preparedness, performance and recommendations to Hastings on a company-bycompany basis.



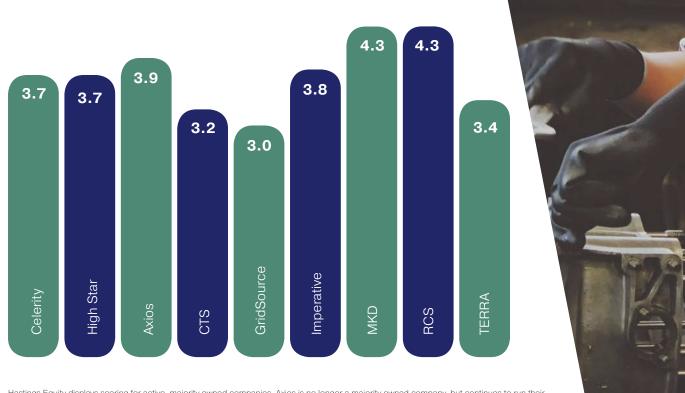
## **ESG Program Review** process:

Define KPIs using GRI Disclosures

Evaluate across 5 major categories:

- 1. Social Capital
- 2. Human Capital
- 3. Environment
- 4. Governance & Business
- 5. Ethics

Responses provided by portfolio companies assessed using our Glide Path Feedback Process



Hastings Equity displays scoring for active, majority owned companies. Axios is no longer a majority owned company, but continues to run their own ESG evaluation process

## **Case Study** Axios

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

### **Product Lifecycle & Climate Risk**

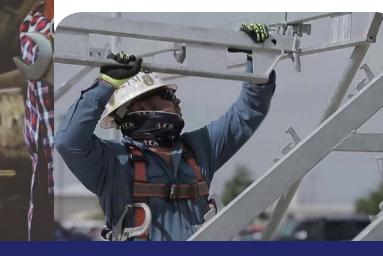
Improvement Metric: Developing a strategy to encourage the avoidance of chemicals of concern.

Recommendation: Consider developing a chemicals of concern strategy that specifies preferences for products that disclose their chemical ingredient information and encourages substitutions away from chemicals of concern.

### Environment

Improvement Metric: Building upon plans to resume renewable energy procurement in 2023, consider leveraging the outputs from previous GHG inventories to develop a GHG emissions reduction strategy.

Recommendation: Consider creating an emission reduction strategy with reduction targets that addresses material GHG emission categories identified by the previous GHG inventories.



### 2023 ESG Report

### Axios Industrial Group ESG Score Summary

Social Capital	4.8
Iuman Capital	3.9
Product Lifecycle & Climate Risk	3.3
Environment	4.3
eadership & Governance	4.4
Dverall Evaluation	3.9

### Leadership & Governance

Improvement Metric: Assess the ability to track communication and implementation of policies for the prevention of bribery & corruption and anti-competitive behavior.

Recommendation: Consider tracking metrics reflecting the communication of bribery & corruption and anti-competitive behavior prevention policies to employees and the completion of any associated training to identify and rectify any implementation gaps. Assess the ability to synergize this effort with the existing continuous training programs around employee health & safety.

### **Human Capital**

Improvement Metric: Assess the ability to ensure consistent reporting of primary employee data.

Recommendation: Seek to expand upon existing diversity reporting process to generate primary data for new employee hires, employee turnover, and wage ratios for all employee classes. Consider some form of quality check or review by Axios's HR team prior to external communication to prevent discrepancies in the data and ensure consistency.



## **Case Study TERRA Staffing Group**

Headquartered in Everett, Washington, TERRA is a leading provider of staffing services for industrial, administrative, and technical staffing across a wide range of industries such as industrial, consumer products, food and beverage, and logistics. Hastings invested in TERRA in February 2023, as the third platform investment in Fund V.

People are at the heart of everything TERRA does. The business is focused on helping people find jobs and thereby reduce unemployment. The global labor shortage has affected companies everywhere, including in industrial and administrative roles. TERRA provides unique, technology-driven solutions to companies with difficult-to-fill jobs that often strain Human Resource departments.

In addition to connecting the employers with the right workers, TERRA also gives back to the community. The business helps communities through charitable work and a dedication to career growth, while promoting diversity, inclusion, and equality. TERRA provides the opportunity through its monthly webinar series and widely-read blog to share information with employers about how to advance diversity, equity and inclusion. For decades the business has been sharing information and advocating for inclusive hiring practices as well as fair and equitable treatment for all.

"Our business is about people and Hastings understood that from day one. Keeping our customers and our working associates satisfied



and fulfilled is the key to success in our industry. Jenifer and I are excited for this partnership with Hastings which allow us to continue exceeding our customers' expectations. Most importantly we are excited about what this partnership will mean for **TERRA** and its continued growth ambitions." **Greg Lambert, CEO at TERRA** 

## 2023

**TERRA** was named to **Puget Sound Business** Journal's Middle Market Fast 50 List<sup>1</sup>

# 2024

**TERRA** was presented with the Best of Staffing® award for both client and talent satisfaction<sup>2</sup>





1 TERRA was named to Puget Sound Business Journal's Middle Market Fast 50 List in 2023. The list appraises and highlights public and private business headquartered in Washington that are within the middle market category. The companies on this list generated a combined \$12.9 billion in revenue last year, growing their combined revenue by 65% from three vears ago

<sup>2</sup> In 2024, TERRA won the Best of Staffing Client and Talent 5-Year Diamond Awards for providing superior service to their clients and candidates for at least five consecutive years. ClearlyRated's Best of Staffing® Award winners have proven to be industry leaders in service quality based entirely on ratings provided by their clients and candidates

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## **Celebrating our** contribution to society

Hastings continues to support the Sonnenberg Scholars Program at Rice Business School,

### **Scholars Program**



# **7 ESG Approach: Manager-level**

The number of the second secon is committed to promoting ESG factors across its own business and operations. We believe it is important to practice what you preach and to ensure that ESG is embedded across the firm as part of our day-to-day activities at the Manager-level.



The Sonnenberg Scholarship fund has been set up at Rice Business School in honor of Alex and was accepted to Wharton Business School, where he earned an M.B.A. and progressed



## **Q&A** with **Eliza Oshana McGrath Head of Investor Relations**

Q: Tell us about your background and career to date. What's been your experience as a woman working in finance and private equity?

A: I have been immersed in the finance sector for over two decades, observing its transformation in terms of workforce diversity. After earning a degree in International Finance & Marketing, I began my career in finance in 2001 as an analyst at Lehman Brothers in New York. My incoming class was a diverse group of about 60 recent graduates, with women comprising roughly half of the cohort. Initially, I believed this indicated a balanced environment. However, I soon realized that the broader firm operated within a predominantly male-centric hierarchy, requiring me to actively navigate and assert my path upwards.

After my tenure at Lehman Brothers, I transitioned into the alternatives space, focusing on investor relations and fundraising. This role allowed me to combine my analytical finance skills with a creative marketing approach, aligning closely with my academic background. Over the years, I've observed the growing significance of this role, particularly as the competition for alternative investments has intensified. Notably, the gender dynamics within this sector have shifted. Initially female-dominated, the field has now achieved a more equitable gender distribution.

Fortunately, there has been a noticeable reduction in the gender gap within investment teams, with concerted efforts to integrate women into deal-making roles. While there remains a significant disparity at the senior levels of finance, encouraging initiatives aimed at retaining and advancing senior women are underway, leading to tangible progress.

### Q: Tell us about your role at Hastings. What attracted you to the firm?

A: At Hastings, I serve as the head of investor relations and fundraising. In my previous roles, I had the privilege of cultivating robust relationships with various institutional investors. My responsibilities encompassed capital raising, product development and structuring, investment performance analysis, and executing strategic marketing initiatives.

What drew me to Hastings was the chance to apply my expertise within a smaller, agile firm where I could make a significant impact. The investor relations role here is ing to the broader private equity industry. Reflecting on multifaceted, involving the development of innovative my career, it's inspiring to witness the evolution of initiasolutions to meet investor needs, strategic marketing, tives and support systems designed to empower women and maintaining transparent communication with our in finance. I am deeply passionate about sharing my journey and advocating for continuous progress in this stakeholders. area.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my role at Hastings is the opportunity to collaborate closely with our Over the years, numerous networks and organizations investors, board members, and portfolio companies. have emerged that champion the development and This collaborative environment enables me to harness advancement of women in finance - a stark contrast the diverse range of backgrounds and experiences within to the landscape 20 years ago. I am actively involved in the extensive Hastings network, fostering innovation and several of these groups and conferences, supported by Hastings, which encourages its employees to engage driving success. and participate in such initiatives.

**Q**: Why is diversity important to you and Hastings has consistently prioritized its employees, how is it championed at Hastings? emphasizing the importance of fostering diverse and inclusive teams. I take pride in being part of a firm that A: Diversity holds significant importance to me both pervalues individual differences, promotes an employeesonally and professionally. As a woman in the finance centric culture, and actively supports initiatives that drive sector, I take pride in representing my firm and contributdiversity and inclusion.



"This collaborative environment enables me to harness the diverse range of backgrounds and experiences within the extensive Hastings network, fostering innovation and driving success."

# **8 Conclusion**

hank you for taking the time to read our ESG report for 2023. We will continue to refine our approach to ESG and we set out below our priorities for 2024.

HighStar

### **Priorities for 2024 and beyond**

Work with our dedicated ESG consultant to enhance our portfolio-level ESG reporting

Continue to focus on diverse & dynamic workforces, and new initiatives to promote this important topic across our business

Implement formal ESG training for Hastings employees and potential roll out for portfolio companies

Explore new ESG initiatives and promote further engagement on ESG topics within the firm

For further information or questions about this ESG Report, potential feedback or ESG related topics, please contact Eliza McGrath at emcgrath@hastingsequity.com

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### 2023 ESG Report

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