

Alipay is investing \$145 million to grow women's soccer in China

China's national women's soccer team just got a big boost from online payments app Alipay.

The Alibaba-affiliated company is taking the lead on a 1 billion yuan (\$145 million) commitment to support Chinese women's soccer over the next decade.

The money will be used to support several **initiatives** including the "performance improvement of the China Women's National Football Team, " and the development of young players, Alipay said in a statement.

initiatives 创始

It is the biggest investment in women's soccer in China ever, according to Alipay. This "is a smart business move that also can have positive social benefits, " said Duncan Clark, author of "Alibaba: The House That Jack Ma Built."

The injection of cash comes as the US Women's National Team, which **clinched** a fourth victory on July 7 at the World Cup, pushes back against a pay **disparity** between the women's and men's game. The team has **sued** for equal pay at home and called for more investment in the sport globally.

Clinch 拥抱; 敲定; 解决

disparity 不一致

Sue 请求; 控告

pledge 保证; 许诺

China, meanwhile, has been trying to build up its **prowess** in the sport. The Chinese government in 2016 unveiled a plan to transform the country into a "soccer **powerhouse**" by 2050, investing in thousands of training programs and football pitches aimed at both the men's and women's game.

Prowess 勇猛; 威力

powerhouse 权威

The **pledge** to women's soccer is not Alipay's first investment into the sport. The company in November struck a €200 million (\$225 million) sponsorship deal with European football body UEFA to be its official global payment partner.