



Gloria Kamanzi Uwizera, CEO of Glo Creations textile and design printing company in Rwanda

Photo by Tom Gilks

About the Mentoring Women in Business Programme

The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women

The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women was established in 2008, with the mission of empowering women entrepreneurs in developing and emerging economies. Its vision is a world where women have equal opportunities to establish and grow businesses, resulting in a brighter future for women and their communities.

The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women supports women entrepreneurs in developing and emerging markets to access the skills, technology, networks and financial services they need to become successful small and growing business owners, contribute to their economies and have a stronger voice in their societies. To date, the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women has reached over 136,000 women in more than 90 countries.

Working in partnership with local and international non-profit organisations, the private and public sector, the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women channels its projects through three programmes: the Enterprise Development Programme, the Mobile Technology Programme and the Mentoring Women in Business Programme.

The Mentoring Women in Business Programme

Since it was piloted in 2010, the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women's Mentoring Women in Business Programme has carved out a unique space in the online mentoring field. It has supported over 2,000 women entrepreneurs in 90 developing and emerging markets, and has recruited and trained over 2,000 mentors from over 45 countries.



"Giving women the chance to become financially independent and make the most of their talents is the key to higher living standards and stronger economies."

Cherie Blair, Founder

How does the Mentoring Women in Business Programme work?

The Mentoring Women in Business Programme matches women entrepreneurs in developing and emerging economies with men and women mentors around the world.

Women entrepreneurs are looking for support during their entrepreneurial journeys. They join the programme to reflect, grow as leaders and find solutions to challenges across different aspects of their businesses, including marketing, communications, technology, accounting, finance and human resources. Mentors have at least seven years' experience and come from diverse sectors.

The one-on-one mentoring relationship is at the heart of the programme. Over the course of a year, women work online with a dedicated mentor, using communication tools like Skype or Google Hangouts. They spend two hours each month working on an action plan that revolves around the mentee's business and professional development needs, as well as the mentor's own expertise and learning objectives. The programme's 'relationship support' team provides dedicated support to each mentee and mentor, and closely tracks their progress during their year in the programme.

Mentees and mentors also become part of a global community of committed, ambitious entrepreneurs who share knowledge through a bespoke online platform.

Through the platform's community forum, participants can become invested in each other's success, offer peer support and build their networks locally and globally. The platform also houses a wide range of resources including videos, webinars, articles, templates, working groups on business topics, participant profiles and trainings.

Training is an integral part of the programme. When they join the programme, mentors and mentees undertake three hours of training on best practices in mentoring, which helps to set expectations and ensure they have techniques to build a successful mentoring relationship.

Monthly webinars on business and inspirational topics give participants and alumni front-row access to inspirational experts and industry leaders. This offers a chance to build new skills, connect, ask questions and share ideas. Local events provide mentees and mentors with an opportunity to connect in person.

Online mentoring supports those who might be excluded due to gender, location or time constraints to participate in mentoring relationships and benefit from personalised support. By building skills and passion for mentoring, mentees are encouraged to go on to mentor others, creating cycles of knowledge-transfer and support.

What is the aim of the programme?

For mentees, the programme provides an opportunity to:



Boost their confidence



Build their business, leadership and mentoring abilities



Expand their networks



Access new information



Reflect, strategise and problem-solve



Tap into a critical support system

For mentors, the programme provides:



Valuable learning and growth opportunities



Inspiration for their own work



Opportunities to tap into a global community and network



Flexibility to volunteer and share their expertise without leaving their desks