Five years of investing in women
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.
This is our fifth year of delivering programmes for women’s economic empowerment, and the past year has seen exponential growth in the numbers of women the Foundation has been able to reach. Our work continues to be vital as women entrepreneurs around the world face challenges in access to training, technology, networks and capital. There has been progress, as more and more women in many of the countries we work in are being educated to degree level, which is an important step in the right direction. However, this is not necessarily translating into economic opportunities for women.

I have seen evidence of this first hand. On a trip to visit our projects in the Middle East in a previous financial year, I met women who had a good education but were unable to find employment and did not have the support needed to set up a business. This is where the Foundation’s work comes in. The entrepreneurs we work with are ambitious and determined to succeed against the odds. Our support connects the dots from ambition to achievement, whether by facilitating access to capital through mobile technology, connecting an entrepreneur to a life-changing mentor or by providing essential business skills training.

Our work also brings wider economic benefits. When we support one woman entrepreneur, the positive impact in turn benefits those who she inspires, her community which benefits from her leadership and her local economy which benefits from the success of her business activities.

I am very grateful to my predecessor Robert Clinton for his contribution as chairman for the charity’s first five years of operations and for continuing to serve as a trustee. I also speak for all of the trustees when I say that we could not achieve as much as we do without the dedicated and skilful work of our CEO and the Foundation team. I am particularly thankful to Henriette Kolb for serving as CEO from May 2009 to August 2013. Her tireless efforts have put the Foundation in an excellent position that will enable our current CEO, Sevi Simavi, to take our work to new heights.

Furthermore, the continuing commitment and input of our existing donors and partners, alongside newly formed partnerships, has made it possible for us to significantly increase our reach. For that we are enormously grateful, and we look forward to the years ahead.

Martin Kaye
Chairman
Our vision:

A world where women have equal opportunities and the capability, confidence and capital necessary to establish and grow businesses, resulting in a brighter future for the women themselves and their communities as a whole.
A message from the CEO

I am delighted to have joined the Foundation at this exciting time. It has been nearly five years since our first projects commenced and we have been able to reach over 100,000 women entrepreneurs across more than 70 countries. I am inspired by the Foundation team’s achievements in such a short period of time under the leadership of the previous CEO, Henriette Kolb, with the oversight of the board of trustees, and our founder Cherie Blair’s endless support and advocacy efforts around the world.

Our achievements are made possible by the Foundation’s focus on partnerships. Our collaborative approach has allowed us to provide intensive business incubation support through our Enterprise Development Programme, online support in many different countries through our Mentoring Programme, and large-scale support to tens of thousands of women through our Mobile Technology Programme.

We are very much a learning organisation. As we look forward to the next five years, this is a time of reflection, understanding what works and how we can best achieve impact for the women entrepreneurs we support. Our enterprise development model of business incubation support has been tested, developed and replicated. We have been refining our online mentoring platform and incrementally expanding our recruitment activities for mentors and mentees. We have been innovating different ways of working with commercial entities, which carries risks but also opportunity for scale. Additionally, access to capital is an area that we plan to build on in the next five years, as it continues to be the most pertinent challenge faced by the women we support.

Above all, we plan to deepen our existing partnerships and work to build new ones, to enable us to expand our reach and achieve an even greater impact. Thank you to all who have helped us come so far.

Sevi Simavi
CEO
113,000+ women
5 years 70 countries

2,200 women entrepreneurs given intensive enterprise development support

970 connected to mentors over the internet across more than 50 countries

110,500 supported through projects using innovative mobile technology

100% of participants expanded their networks in our Sierra Leone Women Entrepreneurs Project

84% of mentees accessed new markets through our Mentoring Programme in Brazil, Colombia, Haiti, Honduras and globally

22% of participants increased revenue in our Self-Worth Foundation Fostering Women Entrepreneurs project in Jerusalem
100% of participants increased business capability in our Middle East Women Entrepreneurs Project in Lebanon and Palestine.

97% of participants in our Tanzania Women’s SME Development Project gained confidence.

300 new entrepreneurship opportunities created in India through our Mobile Technology Programme.

94% of mentees improved their ICT skills in Malaysia, the Philippines and globally.

83% of subscribers in Indonesia said our mobile business training service was an inexpensive way to become a better-informed businesswoman.

We operate in over 70 countries around the world, providing women with the skills, technology, networks and access to capital that they need to become successful small and growing business owners, so that they can contribute to their economies and have a stronger voice in their societies.

Here are just a few examples of the impact of our work over the last five years.*

*This information was taken from our annual reports from 2008 to 2013. For more details on the impact of our work, download the full reports at www.cherieblairfoundation.org
Enterprise Development

The Enterprise Development Programme was developed to address the challenges that women entrepreneurs face, primarily by enhancing access to capital, as well as providing links to new markets, delivering tailored business training, and facilitating business registration.

Across Africa, Asia and the Middle East our enterprise development projects continue to make a significant impact, having reached over 500 women entrepreneurs in the past year and over 2,200 in total since 2009. The first ever network for women entrepreneurs in Sierra Leone, which we set up in partnership with the African Foundation for Development, continues to thrive, thanks to support from GE and the Como Foundation.

In Tanzania, we have developed a new project which has already provided 61 women with management training in partnership with the Tanzania Gatsby Trust and the ExxonMobil Foundation. We expect to reach an additional 140 in the coming year. Our work continues to grow across the Middle East, where we have provided over 200 women in Israel, Lebanon and Palestine with business skills training.

We would not be able to achieve as much as we do without the support and cooperation of our partners, for which we are very grateful. In the Middle East alone, our work is made possible by the Cheryl Saban Self-Worth Foundation for Women & Girls, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, Ooredoo, Oak Foundation, Tomorrow’s Youth Organization (Lebanon and Palestine), Al Majmoua, Economic Empowerment for Women, Koret Israel Economic Development Funds, and Western Galilee College.

The Enterprise Development Programme is in the process of scaling existing projects, as well as designing and launching new projects, such as our new partnership with Accenture in Rwanda where we aim to support 15,000 women entrepreneurs over two years.

Elizabeth’s story:

Elizabeth Victor Kimaro started her soap processing business in 2011 using her personal savings and support from her family. Prior to joining the project, Elizabeth’s monthly profit was 215,000 Tanzanian shillings on average, enough to provide a small secondary income for the household. Elizabeth wanted to expand the business but she did not have professional packaging material, did not have a marketing strategy and lacked basic business training.

She took part in the project’s management training workshops, which helped her to improve her record keeping and her ability to set competitive prices for her products. With the improved record keeping, she found she had more time to spend on marketing and, with the more competitive prices, she saw her sales and her profit margin increase as a result. A year later, her monthly profit had increased substantially to more than 310,000 shillings on average.

Elizabeth is now receiving further guidance from a business coach who is helping her with product packaging and quality assurance so that she can compete with bigger industrial soap companies in the market.
Elizabeth's story:

Amal Chebib, flower shop owner in Lebanon, photo by Karim Sakr
Mentoring

The Foundation has developed an innovative programme which facilitates cross-border support to women entrepreneurs over the internet. Using an online tool designed in partnership with Google, we carefully match women in developing and emerging countries with male and female mentors around the world according to their interests and expertise. Mentors and mentees spend 12 months working one-on-one to achieve key business goals and can connect with other participants, access resources, share ideas, build their networks and support one another as a group through our online platform. We launched a new version of the platform in April 2013 after extensive surveys. This includes a more interactive forum and new ways for participants to customise their online profiles and activities.

Overall, we have matched 970 women since the programme was first piloted in 2010. More than 99% of those who finished the programme and filled in feedback forms reported that they gained confidence in themselves and a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as a result of the programme. Over 96% developed their business skills and 68% increased their financial knowledge and understanding of funding options. Respondents have reported hiring over 200 new employees in total since starting the programme and more than 26% increased profits or sales. Mentors benefit too, as they expand their networks, gain new skills, learn about a different market and gain insights which revitalise their own careers.

We could not have come this far without our partners, including Bank of America, Qualcomm Wireless Reach, Accenture, Marsh & McLennan Companies, UN Women, Google, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, US Department of State, Relief International, UNDP and many more. With over 50 programme partners, there are too many to name, but we are grateful to each and every one of them for enabling us to achieve as much as we have for the women we support.

Zeti’s story:

Zeti, an entrepreneur and mother of six in Malaysia, started out by making cakes from home. She hoped to work with a mentor to grow her enterprise, gain more customers and improve her English and computer skills.

Zeti was matched with Brinda, a strategy and management consultant from the UK. Brinda worked with Zeti on her business strategy, financial plan and ways to promote her products and enter new markets. With Brinda’s support, Zeti created order forms and flyers for her business, sought out training, wrote a marketing plan, expanded her product line and started selling her cakes at a local school. As a result, Zeti’s revenue has increased 13-fold and she has been able to hire an employee to help her full time. She now has to turn away orders because she is so busy.

With the extra income, Zeti has been able to start paying back a student loan and hopes to be able to open a shop in Kuala Lumpur. She has started working on plans and financing to make this goal a reality, and recently obtained a small loan to expand her business through a Malaysian micro-credit institution.
Employee at The Pomegranate Workshop in India, an education business owned by Priya Srinivasan, photo by Ashesh Shah
Combining research, projects and advocacy, the Mobile Technology Programme creates sustainable economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs through the use of mobile phones and services. We work in partnership with organisations to deliver projects which integrate women entrepreneurs into retail channels and also those which build customised mobile applications or adapt existing ones to address specific business challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

Over the last five years, the programme has reached 110,500 women entrepreneurs. In partnership with the ExxonMobil Foundation, Nokia, Indosat (a member of the Ooredoo group) and MTN, our award-winning Business Women service has delivered business training to over 100,000 women across Nigeria, Tanzania and Indonesia. In addition, face-to-face training has been provided to over 3,700 women entrepreneurs in Nigeria and Indonesia through our partnerships with the Youth for Technology Foundation and Mercy Corps Indonesia.

We have partnered with the Self Employed Women’s Association and the Vodafone Foundation in India to develop a mobile-based management information system for a rural distribution network, with the aim of reaching 2,500 women entrepreneurs. This service was given the Best Mobile Service in Emerging Markets Award at the 2014 Mobile World Congress and was also awarded an Innovation Grant by GSMA mWomen in 2013. Through our project in partnership with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Millicom (Tigo), we have trained over 870 women across Rwanda, Ghana and Tanzania as mobile money agents and have facilitated access to credit for over 90 women. The Mobile Technology Programme continues to develop innovative new services and is currently working on new projects in Nigeria, Burma and beyond which aim to benefit tens of thousands more women.

Esther Igwe set up her own business making accessories for weddings and events from a shop in order to help provide for her five children. Business was steady but Esther wanted to find a way to increase revenue. She subscribed to our Business Women service and also took part in our face-to-face business training in an effort to improve as an entrepreneur.

Esther learned about business planning and the importance of diversifying income streams. She has put this training into practice, using her spare shop space to stock toys, books and stationery, which has increased her income. However, Esther attributes an increase in repeat business to the Business Women service specifically. One of the training texts taught the importance of customer relationships. Esther focused on building relationships with customers and, as a result, repeat business has increased by some 40% since she changed her approach.

The increased revenue is enabling her to save, with a view to reinvesting in her business in the future, another lesson which Esther learned from Business Women. Since achieving success in her business activities, Esther is now a role model in her community, advising other women on their ventures.
Esther's story:
Idorenyin Samual, owner of a water purification business in Nigeria, photo by Mile 91/Ben Langdon
Our team

Innovative
Our team is dedicated to developing innovative projects that support women entrepreneurs around the world.

Knowledgeable
Cumulatively, our staff have over 125 years of international development experience.

Global
Our staff speak 14 different languages and have work experience in more than 55 countries overall.

Collaborative
We are able to achieve as much as we do thanks to the cooperation of partners around the world.

Impactful
We work hard to ensure our projects make a real difference to the women we support.

The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women team is committed to supporting women entrepreneurs around the world. Based in London with a global reach, the Foundation is run by a dedicated team of staff overseen by a board of trustees.

Founder and Patron:
Cherie Blair

Trustees:
Martin Kaye, Chairman
Sara Carello
Robert Clinton
Jessica Learmond-Criqui
Lesley Robinson
Amy Christiansen Si-Ahmed

Staff:
Sevi Simavi, CEO
Margaret Burgess
Jillian Convey
Giulia Corinaldi
Claudia Dickens
Katy Galbraith
Lucy Hayter
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Mobile Technology Programme
Ken Banks
Ann Mei Chang
Gavin Krugel
Kaj-Erik Relander
Maria Thomas
Cherie Blair Foundation for Women strategy session at Accenture's Innovation Centre, photo by John White
Financial overview

In the last five years, the Foundation has raised over £7.7 million for women’s economic empowerment. We are very grateful to the individuals, corporations, institutions, trusts and foundations who have contributed to our cause. Their contributions of funding, expertise, pro bono services and mentoring support have enabled us to reach over 100,000 women entrepreneurs with much-needed support, not only facilitating better lives for the women we work with, but also their families and communities who also benefit from their success.

Our outgoings over the last five years totalled £6.3 million, with over 87% of this going to direct charitable activity. The Enterprise Development Programme accounted for 48% of this expenditure, while 19% went to the Mentoring Women in Business Programme and 33% was spent on the Mobile Technology Programme. The majority of the balance of income has been committed to programme activity, with a proportion set aside as reserves.

This information was taken from our annual reports and audited financial statements. The full reports can be accessed at www.cherieblairfoundation.org.
Aniema Eden, owner of Rasa Ventures, a frozen food business in Nigeria, photo by Mile 91/Ben Langdon
Thank you

We are enormously grateful for the generous support received from a range of donors and partners. We would like to thank our key supporters listed here, as well as others who choose to remain anonymous.

Tony and Cherie Blair
Chartered Management Institute
Chinook Foundation
David and Elaine Potter Foundation
Entrevo
Enterprise Rent-A-Car
Global Partnership for Women and Girls
InMaat Foundation

Inseed Holding Company
ReachOut Foundation
Reed Smith
Sidley Austin
SNR Denton
Taylor Wessing
Wheelock College
Zoopla Property Group

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Chas Moloney
Brooks Newmark
Judith Soeryadjaya
Strauss Group
Nurzhan and Zhanna Subkhanberdin
Sir David Tang
Bruno Wang

Ijeoma Ewurum, a poultry farmer in Nigeria, photo by Mile 91/Ben Langdon
About the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women

The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women provides women with the skills, technology, networks and access to capital they need to become successful small and growing business owners, so that they can contribute to their economies and have a stronger voice in their societies.

www.cherieblairfoundation.org