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.
A message from the Chairman

Women’s economic empowerment is an issue of global importance. When you empower a woman, you drive development both within and beyond her own household. This is because women invest 90% of their income back into their families and communities, which benefits both their immediate society and the wider economy. This is the premise on which the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women is built.

The women we support tell us that they have been able to transform their lives as a result of the projects we run, whether that’s as a result of working closely with a mentor, accessing financial services via a mobile phone or gaining the skills they need to take their businesses to the next level. For these women, business success is not an end in itself – it is a means of building a brighter future both for themselves and for their families and communities.

Over the past year we have grown our projects and supported even more women entrepreneurs across the world. We have been able to achieve extraordinary reach because of the strength of our partnerships. Leveraging the technological know-how of developers, the capacity of multi-national corporations and the local knowledge of partners in the field, we are able to address the key challenges that women in business face.

Our projects empower women to achieve long-term goals as well as providing support through periods of crisis and uncertainty. This was the case with one of our projects in Sierra Leone last year, which provided support to women seeking to fortify their businesses against the repercussions of the Ebola outbreak.

I continue to be inspired by the commitment of all those who drive the work of the Foundation, from our dedicated Founder, CEO and team of staff, to my fellow trustees and our growing band of donors and partners, without whom none of our work would be possible. Together we will continue to make a real difference to women entrepreneurs.

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

In July 2014 I travelled to Gujarat in India to visit one of our projects which is supporting the work of a successful women-led agricultural cooperative formed and organised by the Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA). In partnership with SEWA we have introduced a mobile application to help transform the way these women managed their stock orders and sales. One of the women I met on my visit was Shantaben. She told me that her sales have increased threefold as a result of using the new system, and that she is investing her extra income into a savings account and using it to pay her grandson’s school fees.

Stories like this are why the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women exists. Since we were established in 2008 we have supported over 118,000 women in more than 80 countries across the world. We help to raise the status of women entrepreneurs like Shantaben, empowering them with the confidence, capability and access to capital they need to become thriving business owners and gain greater control over their lives and the lives of their children.

In the past financial year we have consolidated the work of our three programmes, retaining our core focus on using technology to leverage economic opportunities for women. We have focused on evaluating our work to ensure that we truly understand what works best to deliver maximum benefit to women entrepreneurs in developing and emerging markets. The results from our evaluations have been both promising and informative, and we will use these learnings to further develop our work to achieve even greater scale and reach in the years ahead.

Increasing women’s access to financial services has also been a growing priority over the past year. Alongside enhancing the financial literacy of women themselves, we have also forged strong links with financial institutions to encourage them to create tailored products and services for women entrepreneurs. Our advocacy work has helped us to put the issue of financial inclusion for women firmly on the global development agenda.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to everyone who has been part of our incredible journey so far – and part of my own personal journey in my first full year as CEO. Over the next five years we will continue to pitch our aims at ambitious levels. We will strengthen our existing partnerships and we look forward to collaborating with new partners to reach even more women across the world.

Sevi Simavi
CEO
Our vision is 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.

Boosting confidence

Subscribers to our Business Women mobile application in Nigeria and Indonesia became more self-confident – with 91% of women saying they felt their business profits would grow.

Our Mentoring Programme helped to boost the confidence of 95% of mentees.

Increasing access to capital

39% of women in our Enterprise Development project in Tanzania accessed formal financial services.
Improving capability

73% of women who subscribed to our Business Women mobile application in Indonesia said the service gave them pointers on how to find affordable and easily accessible credit options

97% of the women who graduated from our projects increased their business skills

97% of mentees developed their business skills

98% of women in our Enterprise Development project in Lebanon enhanced their skill-set

99% of women in our Mobile Technology project in Rwanda, Ghana and Tanzania increased their skill-set

access to capital

280

Our Mobile Technology project in Rwanda, Ghana and Tanzania facilitated access to credit for over 280 women
Enterprise Development

The Enterprise Development Programme has reached 1,478 women entrepreneurs in the past financial year and over 3,420 women since it was established in 2009.

The Enterprise Development Programme equips women entrepreneurs with the tools they need to become successful small and growing business owners. It operates a three-phased approach which includes providing intensive business training, one-to-one coaching, and business acceleration support, helping women with such activities as registering their businesses and targeting new markets.

Last year, we designed and launched three new projects. One of our existing projects supported 450 business women in Sierra Leone through the outbreak of Ebola in 2014. Over 90% of the women with whom we worked last year reported an increase in confidence as a result of our support.

In addition to enhancing women’s business skills, we have worked to influence financial institutions, both global and local, to provide opportunities for women entrepreneurs. We have established partnerships with banks to encourage them to create tailored products and services for women entrepreneurs in Lebanon and Palestine. We have also worked with global networks such as the Global Banking Alliance for Women, Women’s World Banking and the Small Business Banking Network.

Over the next five years, the Enterprise Development Programme will continue to work in innovative ways, using the latest developments in technology to deliver maximum benefit to women entrepreneurs. We will also put greater emphasis on the issue of financial inclusion, working to increase women’s access to financial services.

Gladys’ story:

Gladys England established her Oasis Juice Bar and Café in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 2011. Gladys needed support to develop her business so she joined the Organization of Women’s Networks for Entrepreneurs (OWNERS), a national network for business women which we developed with the African Foundation for Development in 2012, with generous support from the Pratt Foundation, the COMO Foundation and GE.

Through OWNERS, Gladys attended business management training courses and received one-to-one coaching over the period of a year. This support enabled her to develop a marketing plan and secure a grant for internet connectivity in her bar and café. By June 2014 she had taken on 15 staff and opened a six-bedroom guesthouse.

However, following the outbreak of Ebola in Sierra Leone in 2014 Gladys had to make 12 of her guesthouse employees redundant. An OWNERS representative visited the business to provide Gladys’ remaining staff with education materials on how to prevent Ebola, listen to their concerns and offer moral support. She also supported Gladys to develop cost-cutting strategies that ensured her business survived the crisis. Gladys says: “Being part of the project has been a lifeline during this difficult time. It provides me with a place to talk about business challenges, fears and stress that may be difficult to talk about with anyone else.”
Gladys England, owner of Oasis Juice Bar and Café and local guesthouse in Sierra Leone, photo by Tommy Trenchard
Skilling for Change in Rwanda
**Partners: Accenture and CARE International**

We were extremely excited to launch ‘Skilling for Change’ in April 2014 – an ambitious two-year project, in partnership with CARE International, which will support over 15,000 vulnerable Rwandan women in rural areas. Thanks to programme funding and pro-bono delivery support from Accenture, as well as CARE’s expertise in Village Savings and Loan Associations and linking groups to formal financial institutions, this project aims to enhance women’s financial inclusion through a combination of training, mentoring and access to financial services via mobile phones. Together, we are working to develop a mobile savings and loan solution to link Rwandan women entrepreneurs to formal financial institutions. Project design and set-up is now complete, with training for 15,000 women being rolled out from November 2014. In October 2014 we also launched a 12-part Skilling for Change ‘Business Bootcamp’ webinar series, available to Foundation mentees, partner organisations and women entrepreneurs around the world.

Middle East Women Entrepreneurs
**Partners: Oak Foundation and Tomorrow’s Youth Organisation**

This two-year project, which is supported by Oak Foundation and implemented by Tomorrow’s Youth Organisation, provided 80 women entrepreneurs in Palestine and Lebanon with intensive leadership training focused on building confidence, creativity and communication skills. Concluding in October 2014, it also promoted women’s access to financial services. The project has achieved remarkable success. External evaluators found that 100% of respondents reported an improvement in their overall entrepreneurial capabilities, and the overwhelming majority of participants expanded their businesses, broadened their skill-sets and increased their access to new business networks. All of the women also reported increased confidence as a result of the project, with many reporting that they had become more engaged in the financial decision making of the household and the operation of family businesses.

Advancing Palestinian Women Entrepreneurs
**Partners: Trafigura Foundation and Near East Foundation**

Launched in February 2014, this project is supporting at least 200 women entrepreneurs living in Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron to scale up their small businesses over three years. It is also creating employment for a further 80 women and men in the local economy. With this support, Palestinian women entrepreneurs can act as drivers of development, creating jobs, revitalising their economies and realising their full potential as agents of social change. This project has helped 100% of the participants to date to expand their skill-set.

Business Women in Tanzania
**Partners: ExxonMobil Foundation and Tanzania Gatsby Trust**

We are delivering a project that provides 260 women entrepreneurs in Tanzania with services and training on a range of key business and management skills, as well as facilitating their access to capital. The project includes a tailored coaching service for women entrepreneurs, consisting of face-to-face meetings and sessions via telecom over a 12-month period. Results have been extremely promising so far.
In 2014 a mid-term evaluation of the project found that 80% of participants reported feeling more confident and empowered as a result of the training. Most women also improved their business practices and 75% increased their business networks. Access to formal financial services also increased by 39%.

**Lebanon Women Entrepreneurs**  
**Partners: JPMorgan Chase Foundation and the Lebanese Association for Development – Al Majmoua**

We are providing over 350 women entrepreneurs with intensive enterprise development training, focusing on accessing new markets and financial services. Women received individual coaching, developed business feasibility studies and have been supported to market their products at various events and expos, including a pop-up store at a popular tourist resort in Northern Lebanon. As a result of these opportunities, over half of the women have reported increased profits. The project helps women’s businesses grow sustainably, achieve scale and increase resistance to external shocks and instability, and is expected to generate 100 new jobs in the Lebanese economy. In October 2014, we expanded this successful model to the United Arab Emirates, where we will support 100 women entrepreneurs over 18 months.
Mentoring Women in Business

Since its launch in 2010, the Mentoring Women in Business Programme has developed and carved out a unique space in the online mentoring field, supporting over 1,500 women entrepreneurs in more than 80 developing and emerging economies.

The programme matches women entrepreneurs with men and women mentors, who are entrepreneurs and professionals from around the world. These pairs use the internet to work one-on-one over a period of twelve months to achieve goals that are tailored to the mentee’s needs and the mentor’s expertise. They also become part of a global community of committed, ambitious entrepreneurs and professionals who share knowledge through our online platform and become invested in each other’s success.

In the last financial year, our team provided dedicated, personalised support to mentees to help them build impactful, mutually beneficial relationships with their mentors.

We have forged strong links with local organisations, working closely with them to identify and nominate pioneering women entrepreneurs as mentees. Of mentees to graduate from the programme in the last financial year, 98% were able to realise key business achievements due to their mentor’s support, 97% developed their business skills, 82% found ways to access new markets and 84% hired new employees. The programme also helped to boost the confidence of 95% of mentees, with 99% saying they would recommend it to others.

The Mentoring Women in Business Programme also provides a tremendous learning and growth opportunity for the professionals who serve as mentors, which feeds back into and inspires their work at their own companies. Over the past year, we have worked with a range of corporate partners to embed the mentoring opportunity into their leadership and corporate social responsibility schemes and invite outstanding employees to become mentors.

Gloria’s story:

Gloria Kamanzi Uwizera is the founder and CEO of Glo Creations, a textile design and printing company in Rwanda. She was keen to work with a mentor to improve her systems and build on the successes her business had already achieved.

Gloria was matched with Erin, a senior vice president at Bank of America. Together they drew up a strategic plan for Gloria’s business, focusing on expanding the number of locations where her products were sold. They reviewed her resource management and developed her marketing, which helped her to sell her products to specific groups of clientele within the local market, as well as in the US and Canada. Gloria also introduced smaller, more affordable products to her range. She soon gained new clients and saw a marked increase in her sales.

Erin also felt that she benefited from the programme, as she gained greater cultural awareness and improved her ability to listen before making recommendations.

Gloria’s business has gone from strength to strength. She hired two new employees and started looking at markets in central and east Africa. She was also chosen to print on a thousand costumes for the 20th Commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide and has become a mentor to other women in her community.

Gloria’s story:

1,500 women mentored in over 80 countries
97% of women developed their business skills
98% of women achieved personalised business goals
82% of women accessed new markets

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Gloria Kamanzi Uwizera, founder of Glo Creations textile company in Rwanda, photo by Tom Gilks
In the last financial year we partnered with Facebook to build an online portal that provides resources and top tips for our beneficiaries to enhance their social media skills and support their businesses to grow. We provided supplementary training, tablets and internet access to women entrepreneurs in Malaysia through our partnership with Qualcomm® Wireless Reach™ and thanks to the expertise provided by our mentors and support from Accenture – who provided webinar technology and production services – we launched a webinar series to help our mentees improve their financial literacy skills.

We have continued to develop and improve our online platform and we launched a new version of our matching gadget, the tool we use to find the best possible mentor match for mentees. We have facilitated over 3,000 conversations on our knowledge-sharing and networking forum and have provided access to a monthly webinar series on key business and inspirational topics.

The impact and success of our Mentoring Women in Business Programme is only made possible by the generous support of our partners, including Bank of America, Qualcomm Wireless Reach, Accenture, Marsh & McLennan Companies, Merck, Crescent Enterprises, UN Women, Google, Facebook, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, US Department of State, Relief International, Tune Talk Mobile Prepaid and many more.

We also want to thank our many other supporters, our dedicated team and, most importantly, the entrepreneurs and professionals who participate in our programme each year. These mentees and mentors bring our global platform to life, coming together across thousands of miles to share ideas, offer support and help one another build brighter futures. We are extremely fortunate to be part of their entrepreneurial journeys.

**What our mentees and mentors say**

“The Cherie Blair Mentoring Women in Business Programme has offered me so much more than I could have imagined, it really empowers women and I found it to be like having an invisible friend walking next to you.”

*Carmen, a mentee from South Africa*

“I am fascinated by how such perfect matching could have been made two times! My mentors are very different and both are corresponding exactly to the priorities of the current period of my business.”

*Davorka, a mentee from Croatia*

“Mentoring Ruth has been an incredible journey. Seeing her start her new business from scratch in a new location, helping her plan a strategy and develop her business was amazing. Understanding the reality of a female entrepreneur in Africa was fascinating, I learned a lot from a cultural and personal perspective.”

*Michael, a mentor from the UK*
Mentees in Malaysia attend an ‘Access to Capital’ workshop funded by Qualcomm Wireless Reach, photo by Thanagavalu Rajee
Mobile Technology

113,000 women reached with mobile technology
100,500 women accessed business training via mobile phones
1,000 women trained as mobile money agents in Africa
1,500 women managing an agricultural supply chain in India via a mobile app

The Mobile Technology Programme has been instrumental in fostering a global discussion about the use of mobile technology to support women entrepreneurs. It was formed in 2010, in response to our ground-breaking report, Women & Mobile: A Global Opportunity, published with the GSMA Development Fund, which found that 300 million women in developing countries are missing out on access to mobile technology.

The programme leverages mobile technology to support women entrepreneurs in becoming successful micro, small and growing business owners. Since its launch in 2010 it has reached over 113,000 women.

Combining research, projects and advocacy, the programme creates sustainable economic opportunities through the use of mobile phones and services. Working in partnership with mobile network operators, local NGOs, corporations and thought leaders in the mobile ecosystem, the programme delivers projects across the following three models:

1. Delivering customised mobile applications to address the unique challenges facing women entrepreneurs in developing economies.

2. Increasing the participation and capacity of women in mobile and banking agent networks.

3. Increasing financial inclusion by providing mobile financial services to women entrepreneurs.

The work of the Mobile Technology Programme has won global recognition. In 2014 our project in India received the GSMA Global Mobile Award for ‘best mobile product, service or initiative in emerging markets’ and also won the mBillionth award in the ‘Women and Children’ category.

Jula’s story:

Jula Eha set up her grocery store in Bogor, Indonesia, two and a half years ago using capital borrowed from her sisters.

In the beginning Jula would only buy a few of each item, rather than buying in bulk. Business was “up and down” and during the quiet times she would become demotivated.

All that changed when Jula downloaded Usaha Wanita, the Indonesian version of our Business Women mobile learning tool. She was inspired by the stories of other women who were running successful businesses, saying, “This application gives me the motivation to think that a wife doesn’t always depend on the husband.”

Jula started to think more creatively about how she could make her business a success. She increased her stock levels and soon found that “more people are coming in here because they think this is a complete store”. Soon her profits began to grow.

Jula is now saving money for her children’s education. She has also joined a local community saving initiative which involves a group of women contributing an equal amount to the communal pot each month. Each month one woman gets to keep the entire fund. Jula is finding that the more she saves and invests, the greater the profit she makes.
Jula Eha, grocery store owner in Indonesia, photo by Mile 91/Ben Langdon
Empowering Women, Driving Growth in Rwanda, Ghana and Tanzania

Partners: USAID, Millicom (Tigo), FINCA, EB-Accion, Ghana and Equity Bank Rwanda Limited

This project brought together a mobile operator, a bank and micro-finance institutions to engage women as mobile money agents, by providing business training and access to capital. We trained over 1,000 women across Rwanda, Ghana and Tanzania as mobile money agents and facilitated access to credit for over 280 of these women.

Mobile Financial Services for Women in Nigeria

Partners: Visa Inc., First Bank Nigeria and Youth for Technology Foundation

We are supporting 2,500 women to become branchless banking agents in the retail network of Firstmonie, the mobile money services brand of First Bank Nigeria Limited, a leading financial services provider in Nigeria. These women agents will, in turn, provide Nigerians living in rural and underserved areas with branchless banking and mobile financial services. Our partner, Youth for Technology Foundation, will provide the women with capacity-building training which will equip them with the skills they need to become banking agents. The women will also receive broader entrepreneurial training on key issues such as financial management, customer relationship skills and tools for business growth.
Supply Chain Management Solutions in India

Partners: Vodafone Foundation in India and Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)

This project supports a successful agricultural cooperative known as RUDI, based in Gujarat, India. RUDI buys raw produce from local farmers and sells it via a network of saleswomen known as ‘Rudibens’. We developed a mobile-based management information system that enables the Rudibens to place orders, track inventory and generate sales reports via SMS. Prior to this, the women used informal paper forms and would often spend up to seven hours travelling to order new stock, often arriving to find products unavailable. Over 1,500 Rudibens have been trained by SEWA to use the application. The service has increased efficiency, boosted the Rudibens' profits – as much as threefold in some instances – and helped RUDI to increase its turnover by more than 10%.

Business Women in Nigeria, Tanzania and Indonesia

Partners: ExxonMobil Foundation, Nokia, Youth for Technology Foundation and Mercy Corps (Indonesia)

Launched in 2012, the Business Women mobile learning tool delivered business training and tips via SMS and data to over 100,000 women in Nigeria, Tanzania and Indonesia. The service worked by sending five to six messages to women each week, as part of a year-long business training ‘curriculum’. Messages covered topics such as book-keeping, customer relations, personnel management and sources of capital, and content was tailored to local conditions. The project also delivered classroom training to over 5,000 women entrepreneurs in Nigeria and Indonesia. In 2014 an independent assessment of the project carried out by Michigan State University found that 90% of Business Women subscribers said the service gave them ‘practical guidance’ on growing their businesses and offered ‘an inexpensive way to become a better-informed businesswoman’.
Financial overview

Since the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women was established in 2008, we have raised over £10.7 million for women’s economic empowerment. We are very grateful to the individuals, corporations, institutions, trusts and foundations which have supported our cause. Their contributions of funding, expertise, pro bono services and mentoring support have enabled us to reach over 118,000 women entrepreneurs in more than 80 countries across the world.

In the last financial year 87% of our expenditure went directly towards charitable activities. The Mobile Technology Programme accounted for 41% of this expenditure, while 30% was spent on the Mentoring Women in Business Programme and 29% on the Enterprise Development Programme.

This information was taken from our audited financial statements, which can be accessed in full at www.cherieblairfoundation.org.
Jovita Masanyika, founder of Jonoma Products, a cleaning products company, with her family in Tanzania, 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.

Mr and Mrs Tony and Cherie Blair
COMO Foundation
EN Campaigns
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Samantha White

Joyce Marwa, owner of home-based bakery, Tanzania
photo by Mile 91/Ben Langdon
Joyce Marwa, owner of home-based bakery, Tanzania

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