



Women entrepreneurs.
Redefining the future.

Our strategy 2019-2022

#redefinethefuture

When women entrepreneurs have the support and opportunities to thrive, the future is transformed. Businesses flourish. Communities prosper. Economies grow. Attitudes shift.

For every woman who has discovered the power of being an entrepreneur, so many more are held back: excluded from the knowledge, skills and self-belief an entrepreneur needs, doubted by those around them, or prevented from accessing the credit or resources a business depends on to succeed.

Our role is to support women and girls to break through these barriers. We deliver training, organise mentoring and share knowledge, inspired by the women we work with around the world – and by our partners, donors, staff and collaborators. We open doors to finance, markets and networks. We use technology to help women connect, learn and push boundaries. And we press for change to stop women entrepreneurs being held back.

**We are the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women.
We help release the potential of women entrepreneurs, so they can redefine the future.**

Gladys, a mentee and member of OWNERS women entrepreneur network, is the owner of a juice bar café and guesthouse in Freetown, Sierra Leone



“When I was seven years old I sold peanuts on street corners to help my mum with the household income. Last year I was named by Forbes magazine as one of 15 Global Leaders To Watch in Asia. I never imagined that women could make such great movements.”

Former mentee and current mentor Van Dang is the CEO of Savvycomm, a software development company in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. She has the ambition of making Vietnam a prestigious technology leader on the IT world map.

Why women entrepreneurs?

Because women's economic equality is non-negotiable

But all over the world women earn less than men and are more likely to own micro, vulnerable and informal businesses. They are less likely to have access to assets, property and financial services. They are far more likely to shoulder the burden of unpaid work. This not only restricts economic opportunities and livelihoods for families around the world: it means half the world's population being denied basic human rights.

The UN has called for a 'quantum leap' in women's economic empowerment, and women's entrepreneurship is a vital part of that change. It is an effective way for women to enjoy decent work and participate fully in the economy, especially in economies where formal jobs are scarce. It is a powerful way for women to take control of their lives and, with fairer economic growth, begin to redefine the future.

202 years Based on the current rate of progress it will take 202 years to close the economic gender gap globally.

The Global Gender Gap Report (2018) World Economic Forum; page 15.

Because a sustainable income leads to independence

For the women we work with, becoming an entrepreneur and building a business creates a route towards financial independence – and often away from exploitation. It is a chance to build new skills and new confidence, frequently after years of being denied both.

With that independence comes more opportunity to make yourself heard and shape decisions that affect your life, and these changes create a ripple effect that encourages and supports others to seek new freedoms and achieve financial independence too.



"After leaving high school I worked in a barber shop, then a restaurant. For six years I saved with no idea how to become independent. The stories and advice on the app changed my life. Within two months I was running my own business and my profits have doubled from when I was employed."

Nur, a user of our BusinessWomen app, is the owner of a juice cart in Bandung, Indonesia

Because when women and girls can enjoy their potential, everyone benefits

The women entrepreneurs we support are more than business owners. They are innovators. They are leaders. They are role-models. They are change-makers. With their success they lift up families, drive down poverty and transform how people think.

Research shows that when women are supported to work, they use a larger proportion of their earnings and investments to benefit their families and their communities. So while entrepreneurship can have a profound impact on the women themselves, the potential consequences for the wider development of our societies and economies are huge.

\$5 trillion

If women and men participated equally as entrepreneurs, global GDP could rise by 3-6%, boosting the global economy by \$2.5-\$5 trillion.

Boston Consulting Group: www.BCG.com

Because young women and girls are the future

As populations continue to grow in low and middle income countries in the next 30 years, investing in the economic empowerment of girls and young women is pivotal to the broader struggle for gender equality.

So as we embark on our new strategy, we are exploring how to provide girls and women with the entrepreneurial skills and opportunities they need to gain a strong foothold in the economies of the future – and to build safer, more secure lives for themselves and their families.

628 million Young women represent the majority of the 628 million young people aged 15-24 who have neither a job nor an education.

Young, Woman And Unemployed: The Triple Challenge Report (October 2015) Plan International; page 7.

Because the possibilities are endless

We don't yet know what could be accomplished if women had economic equality – because no country in the world has achieved it. But research suggests the potential for social change and economic development is on a scale beyond our imagination.

Women entrepreneurs could open new frontiers in every field of business, bringing us closer to solutions for the world's most pressing problems and transforming the way we live our lives.

For all of these reasons, we can't afford not to empower women entrepreneurs



Our vision is for every woman and girl to enjoy equal economic opportunities so they can live to their full potential

Salma, BusinessWomen app user, is an entrepreneur and batik designer in Kibaha, Tanzania

Our values guide everything we do

People matter



We recognise and defend each person's innate worth. We listen to what women tell us and hold ourselves accountable to our partners, our staff and, most importantly, to the women we work with

Partnerships are powerful



Collaborating with our partners makes us stronger and makes our work more relevant. So we respect and stand in solidarity with our partners around the world and with women's networks and organisations that share our ambitions.

Empowerment is sustainable



We are committed to empowering women to transform their lives for good. We seek holistic impactful approaches that create ripples that spread through families, communities, and institutions – and deliver impact far beyond the individuals we reach directly.

The future is entrepreneurial – and so are we



We are bold, curious, open and agile. Using technology to help women learn, connect and develop new skills is at the heart of what we do. We work with women who are redefining the future.

Since 2008, we've worked with nearly 150,000 women entrepreneurs in over 100 countries to move this vision closer to reality

Who we support

Women and girls face barriers to economic equality everywhere. Our priorities are low and middle income countries, where the barriers are usually biggest and where entrepreneurship offers a powerful path to financial independence. Between now and 2022, we will focus on working with:

- Women who own or are starting up small and growing enterprises.
- Women micro-entrepreneurs involved in small-scale informal work who may be vulnerable to poverty or exploitation.
- Young women and adolescent girls who are aspiring entrepreneurs or need increased economic opportunities.

"Research shows that boosting women's participation in the economy is critical to accelerating global development and spurring economic progress. The ExxonMobil Foundation is proud to support an initiative that will increase financial literacy and access for women business owners."

Kevin Murphy, President of the ExxonMobil Foundation, funder of our Road to Growth programme

Who we work with

Working with community and not-for-profit organisations, corporations, financial institutions and government bodies, we co-create and deliver programmes to meet the diverse needs of women entrepreneurs in different contexts and geographies.

The Foundation is grateful for the support and commitment of individuals, private sector partners, trusts, institutions, foundations, and others who give their time, expertise and funding to enable women entrepreneurs to redefine the future.

"As a woman in a male-dominated industry, I struggled to have my ideas heard and progress to a management role. Frustrated, I decided to launch my own company. Since joining the mentoring programme, I've become more confident in myself and my business. I've improved my English, I have ten new clients and I hired a new employee. I dream of becoming a leader in this industry and have set up an NGO to support local artisans to export their goods to international markets."

Mariela is the founder of a shipping and logistical support business in Argentina and co-founder of Mujeres Go Global

How we work

Women face a huge range of barriers when they start or grow a business. How these barriers can be tackled depends on where a woman lives and her social situation, so our work is always based on local realities and shaped by the people we support. Our approach is:



Participatory

The women we work with are the experts on their own lives, so we find and design the best solutions to the challenges they face together.



Robust

We constantly evaluate, learn and evolve, by assessing the difference we make to people's lives.



Holistic

We respond to the specific social, economic and systemic barriers women face, and work with men and boys to achieve the widest possible impact.



Digital

Technology has always driven our work forward, and we continue to seek out new possibilities for women entrepreneurs and new ideas that could help us work more efficiently or increase our scale and impact.



Innovative

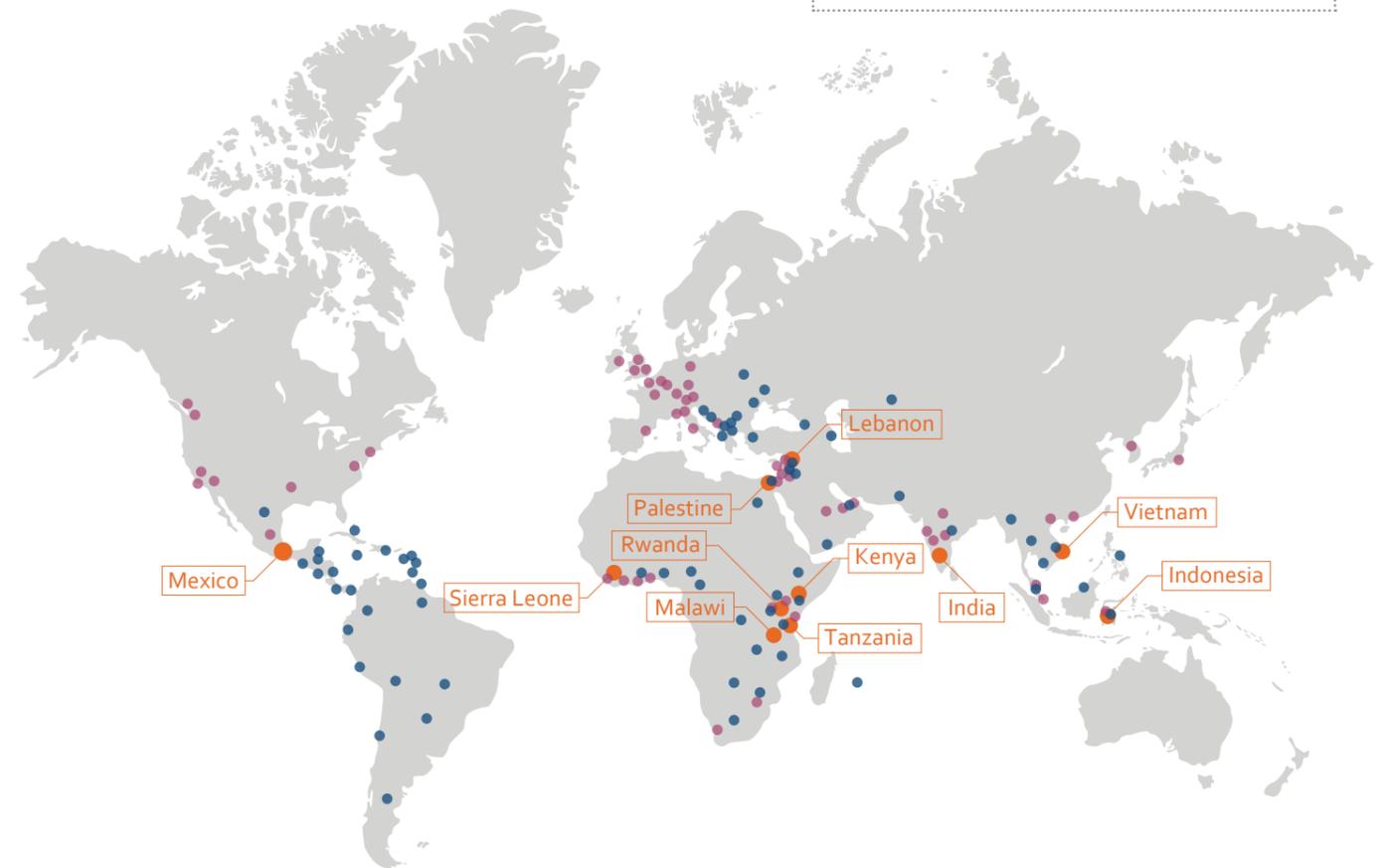
We are committed to innovation and are always ready to test approaches or undertake research that could disrupt the status quo and lead to better results.

With our global network of partners, we have helped women all over the world discover that entrepreneurship leads to unstoppable progress

Where we work

Key

- Entrepreneurship programmes to date
- Influencing activities to date
- Mentoring presence in 105 countries



Where next?

In this strategy period we are prioritising working in places where the need is greatest for women and girls and where our experience, knowledge and relationships, combined with the national context, mean we can achieve the greatest impact.



"I lost my hand operating a noodle-making machine in my grocery store several years ago. If I take help from others, I feel handicapped. But the workshops provided me with the right level of support. They gave me the skills and confidence I needed to take my aspirations forward by myself."

Dhanashree, micro-entrepreneur from our Driving Women's Business Growth in India programme, runs a number of small-scale enterprises including dress making and milk selling

Romita, a participant of our WE Can programme, is the founder of Admirus healthcare consultancy and online portal MedSamaan in India

Our mission is to empower women to start, grow and sustain successful businesses, so they can redefine the future for themselves and their societies

Our goals

We are increasing the scale, breadth and impact of our work. Over the next three years we will pursue three goals to redefine the future:



Empower over 100,000 women and girls to fulfil their potential as entrepreneurs, enabling them to earn a better living, set up and develop businesses, grow in confidence and access resources so they can enjoy greater agency in their families and societies.

1



Strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem so it's easier for women and girls to start and grow businesses, increasing access to networks, markets and finance and by breaking down institutional barriers through a strategic programme of research, advocacy and network creation.

2



Build a strong, growing, sustainable organisation, with a culture aligned to our values, fully equipped to thrive and deliver this ambitious strategy.

3

Empowering 100,000 women and girls to fulfil their potential as entrepreneurs

1

We will extend our model and expertise on women's entrepreneurship

As an immediate focus, we will use our experience to create an evidence-based women's entrepreneurship model that can be tailored to women's differing needs wherever they live. This will strengthen the quality and efficiency of how we support women to become more successful entrepreneurs. We will make this happen by:

- Expanding the **training** we offer in business, finance and leadership and how we help more women to **access the resources** they need – including markets, capital and networks.
- Providing **personalised and structured mentoring, peer support and physical and digital networks**, so women can support and inspire each other, build contacts, tap into new opportunities and find new confidence together.
- Continuing to deliver our high-impact entrepreneurship programmes with **women owners of small and growing businesses and micro-entrepreneurs**.
- Testing our programmes to work with **young women and adolescent girls**, so we can introduce a new generation to the power of entrepreneurship.
- **Enabling men and boys to engage in our work**, increasing their support for women's economic equality in their families and communities.
- Putting new systems and processes in place to **evaluate everything we do**, ensuring the impact of our approach keeps on growing.

"I'm more financially independent. Here, a woman has to always look to the man to make certain decisions. But because of the training and the sound knowledge it's given me, now I can say, 'No, this is how I think it should be done'. Because of that it gives me more say in my home."

Olusola, Road to Growth programme participant, runs a design house and college in Lagos, Nigeria

We will develop our women's entrepreneurship programmes into sharable products and services

We will help more women, in more places, to discover the power of entrepreneurship, by developing our women's entrepreneurship model into products and services that can be used by our partners and by women entrepreneurs. We will make this happen by:

- Identifying and developing **flagship programmes** that can be widely shared, and exploring how we can help more women access them more easily – either directly or through partners.
- Creating a **portfolio of digital products and services** that can support more women entrepreneurs in more places, whatever challenges they face.
- Continuing to expand and develop our **intensive mentoring service and online training support**. We'll offer new resources to mentees and mentors, extend into other languages, explore accreditation and work with partners to adapt our services.

We will launch a partnership strategy to empower more women, more sustainably

To create new opportunities for entrepreneurship in communities we currently cannot reach, we will support a wider range of partners to deliver our women's entrepreneurship model, test and incubate new programmes and be part of our growing advocacy focus. We will make this happen by:

- Strengthening our **network of local partners**, in priority countries and globally with organisations that share our commitment to women's entrepreneurship and have the skills to deliver our programmes.
- Improving the **sustainability of our partnerships**, by increasing shared learning between partners, improving our capacity building and the quality of the support our partners offer – even after programmes conclude.
- **Working with more organisations** – international, national and community-based, along with businesses and social enterprises – to **create and test bespoke programmes and undertake research and advocacy** with the power to have widespread impact.

Our targets:

- By 2020, we will have a new **framework in place to measure our impact based on our theory of change**, so we can keep improving our own work and share what we learn across our sector.
- By the end of 2020, we will have researched and tested a programme of work to **help young women and adolescent girls** discover the power of entrepreneurship.
- By the end of 2021, our work with **owners of small and growing enterprises will have expanded across up to 10 focus countries**, with greater emphasis than ever on impact, innovation and technology. And our **larger network of local partners** will help us to deliver greater impact to more micro-entrepreneurs and women living in poverty.
- By 2022, we will offer mentoring in multiple languages, along with additional **leadership development and training resources**.
- By the end of 2022, we will have **helped more than 100,000 women and girls** to have increased agency and fulfil their entrepreneurship potential.

Strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem so it's easier for women and girls to start and grow businesses



We will advocate for change to stop women entrepreneurs being held back

The world we are determined to help create is one where women and girls can build businesses on an equal footing with men. We have the experience, the evidence and we're growing the reach. Now it's time to use it to deliver the systemic changes that will enable women entrepreneurs to redefine the future. We will make this happen by:

- Building on the evidence from our programmes we will develop an **advocacy and influencing strategy** so we can become a more powerful voice on the rights of women entrepreneurs.
- Investing in **research** to show the power of women's entrepreneurship, the barriers that exist and the opportunities to break through them.
- **Championing women entrepreneurs** by strengthening our position as thought leaders and raising their voices and awareness of the issues they face.
- Exploring the potential of **networks** to support our influencing work.

Our targets:

- By 2020, we aim to **launch a global campaign** to increase the awareness of the challenges and opportunities for women's entrepreneurship.
- By 2021, we will **have an established advocacy programme** in at least two countries where we work, rooted in knowledge gained through our programmes and supported by ground breaking research and new policy positions.
- By 2022, we will be firmly **established as a thought leader**, bringing insights, stories and evidence of the power of women's entrepreneurship to the global stage.



"After my husband died at a young age, I was left with four sons to support. I started taking on small embroidery jobs but my enterprise outgrew my home. Since the Foundation's programme, my profits are up by 30% and I employ 15 women. My dream is to expand my business to create more jobs for women in need."

Jameela owns an embroidery business in the West Bank, Palestine

Building a strong, growing and sustainable organisation



We will increase our income to more than £4.5m annually by 2022

As our ambition keeps increasing, so does the need to safeguard our long-term future. We have always relied on the generosity of a small number of companies, donors and individuals, but now we need to generate more income from more places. This is critical to ensure we can deliver on our plans for women entrepreneurs. We will make this happen by:

- Forming **closer partnerships** with all of our donors, showing how our renewed ambition can deliver greater impact and by clearly measuring the value of ongoing support.
- Deepening **corporate partnerships** that help companies to meet their own business objectives while increasing women's economic empowerment.
- Building a **global community of individual donors** who share our goals and can fundraise through their own networks.
- Co-creating programmes of work with institutional donors, including projects that focus on vulnerable women and girls as our work in that area increases.
- Exploring the potential of **creating a social enterprise business model** to support the rollout of our products and services.

We will empower our people and ensure our culture reflects our mission

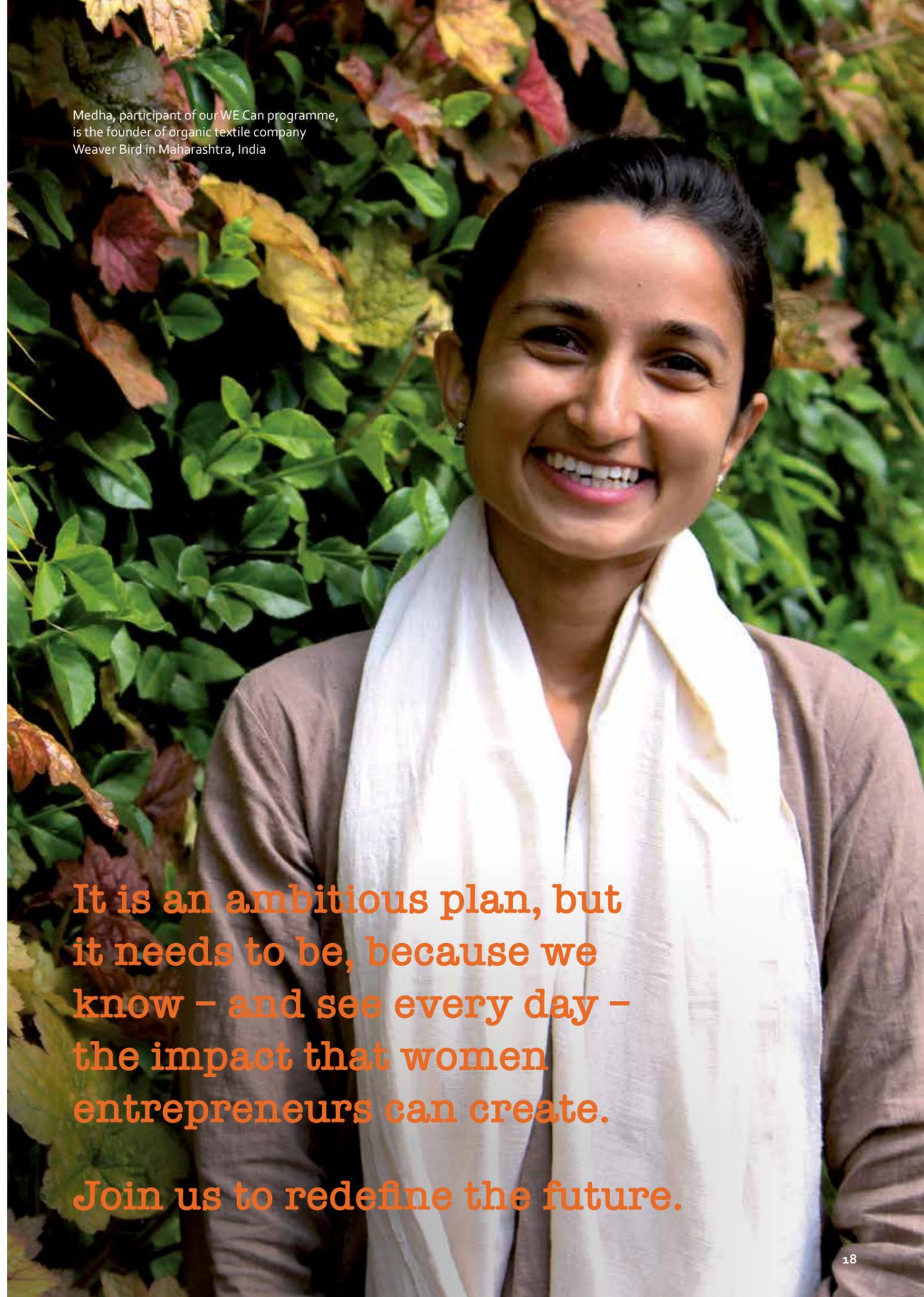
To achieve everything set out in this strategy, we need the way we work to evolve too. We will make this happen by:

- **Recruiting, retaining and developing staff** with the skills and belief to make our vision a reality. In particular we will focus on increasing our expertise in **monitoring and evaluation, advocacy and supporting vulnerable women and girls**.
- Creating a culture based on entrepreneurial spirit, so everyone connected to our organisation feels empowered and supported to achieve our goals.
- Strengthening our **systems and processes** with smart use of technology, and maintaining the highest **ethics and standards of governance**, so nothing distracts us from our mission to empower women to redefine the future.
- **Updating our business model** in response to the changing environment facing international development organisations.

Our target:

By 2022, we will have raised £10million for women entrepreneurs, strengthened our organisation so we have increased financial sustainability, strong systems and processes and a culture that fully empowers our staff.

Medha, participant of our WE Can programme, is the founder of organic textile company Weaver Bird in Maharashtra, India



It is an ambitious plan, but it needs to be, because we know – and see every day – the impact that women entrepreneurs can create.

Join us to redefine the future.



Women entrepreneurs. Redefining the future.

Call: +44 (0)20 7724 3109

Visit: cherieblairfoundation.org

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