



Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women

Mentorship Toolkit 2023



Overview

The Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women (IEEW) is a non-profit organization that exists to educate and empower women business owners around the world economically, socially, and politically. We do this through our signature PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS® (PTB) program, which uses a four-pronged approach focused on classroom learning in Rwanda and Afghanistan, U.S.-based leadership development, mentorship, and paying it forward.

Mentorship provides a solid foundation for women around the world to learn from each other, develop lasting relationships, and increase their entrepreneurial expertise. IEEW pairs American women business owners with students from Afghanistan and Rwanda for the duration of their PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS experience. The PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS mentorship program, now in its 17th year, is considered one of the most important pieces of the student's education.

Our goal is to develop a network of global entrepreneurs excited about becoming long-term mentors, potential business contemporaries, and allies. It is our hope that both the mentee and mentor will benefit from this relationship long after the commitment to the PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS program is over.



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-Laurie Johnson, Phoenix, AZ

What is Mentorship?

Mentorship is a relationship between two people in which the person with more knowledge, experience, and connections in a particular field (the **mentor**) is able and willing to share what they have learned to an individual in that field who is less knowledgeable or professionally accomplished (the **mentee**). A mentor is seen as an experienced or trusted adviser, guide, teacher, confidant, and even friend. Mentors are often the primary people someone relies on for guidance and advice.

Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring is about giving something back. Being a mentor is an opportunity for you to share your knowledge and experience with another woman for the purpose of improving her business and life. You will be able to provide guidance, motivation, support, and role modeling - improving the status of women both domestically and internationally and paving the way for future generations of women entrepreneurs. The PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS program allows you to assist emerging women entrepreneurs from Afghanistan and Rwanda in growing their businesses, supporting their families, and building their countries.

- *Gain broader insight into global business and work issues*
- *Increase your ability to work with individuals with diverse backgrounds*
- *Increase your ability to transfer knowledge more effectively*
- *Grow your leadership capacity*
- *Improve your communication skills*



Benefits of Being Mentored

The benefits of being mentored are numerous. As a mentee, you have the opportunity to learn from someone who is farther along in their career and has gained expertise and experience that they can share to support you in your own career development.

- *Gain expertise and business acumen in specific areas*
- *Increase your self-confidence and self-awareness*
- *Develop leadership skills*
- *Develop strong communication skills*
- *Build a professional network*
- *Get new and different perspectives*

PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS

Mentorship Program

The PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS program begins in January with approximately 30 students in both Afghanistan and Rwanda enrolled in an 8- to 10-week course taught by our Afghan and Rwandan Facilitators. They utilize curriculum developed in collaboration with Northwood University and provide both in-person and virtual training, depending on the context. The Rwandan and Afghan students who wish to receive mentorship are matched with a business owner/leader who commits to providing mentorship during the program. Mentors are introduced to their mentee(s) via email as soon as classes begin. For 2023, IEEW will strive to match mentors and mentees on a 1:1 basis, or 1 mentor to 2 mentees at most. All mentorship will be done virtually.

Throughout the course, mentees will have the opportunity to discuss their coursework and business with their mentor and ask for advice on putting together their business plan. To complete the program, Afghan and Rwandan students must present their business plans to a panel of judges. The top seven students from each country (determined based on business plans and presentations, quizzes, assignments, and class attendance) are invited to attend IEEW's Leadership Development program in the U.S. During Leadership Development, students receive additional training in marketing, trade, accounting, operations, and other key business topics.

Before and after Leadership Development, mentors and mentees can continue meeting virtually, if they choose to do so. However, the formal portion of the mentorship program ends when PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS classes wrap up at the end of March.



Mentorship Timeline

January 1, 2023 – Classes begin virtually in Afghanistan

January 6, 2023 – E-mentorship pairing begins for Afghan students

January 11, 2023 – Classes begin in-person in Rwanda

January 17, 2023 – E-mentorship pairing begins for Rwandan students

January-March 2023 – E-Mentorship focus is on course curriculum and building a business plan

The Mentorship Conversation

Week 1 (January 1-7 Afghanistan) (January 11-17 Rwanda):

- *Get to know each other; build trust*
- *Share your personal stories and business journeys*
- *Establish expectations and set up a reliable system of communication*

Week 2 (January 8-14 Afghanistan) (January 18-24 Rwanda):

- *Start a conversation about the business plan*
- *Review skills and advantages; focus on market assessment*
- *Create a description of the business (goals, mission, vision, products)*

Weeks 3 – 4 (January 15-28 Afghanistan) (January 25-February 7 Rwanda):

- *Review SWOT analysis, marketing mix, and import/export laws and policies*
- *Create an executive summary, marketing plan, and budget*

Weeks 5 – 7 (January 29-February 11 Afghanistan) (February 8 -21 Rwanda):

- *Review basic accounting (transactions, record keeping, financial statements)*
- *Review financial management (share financial information and projections)*
- *Review human resource laws and revise business policies accordingly*
- *Build on the business plan (goals, direction, finances)*

Weeks 8 – 10 (February 12- 25 Afghanistan) (February 22-March 7 Rwanda):

- *Review taxation and import/export laws*
- *Revise and complete the business plan; prepare presentation*
- *Business plans presented to the independent panel of judges*
- *Summary & in-country graduation*

***NOTE: The busiest time for E-Mentorship is early- to mid-March, when business plans are due.**

Organizing the Business Plan

The PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS program requires each Afghan and Rwandan student to complete and present her business plan to a panel of judges towards the end of the course. The mentor can be a great sounding board for helping the mentee complete their plan and prepare to present it. Support on business plan development can include:

- *Ensuring all necessary components of the plan are included*
- *Encouraging the mentee to think strategically about their plan*
- *Asking questions when a portion of the plan does not make sense or seem to be realistic*
- *Providing minor assistance with editing and grammar*
- *Bringing in support on particular aspects of the business plan that are not your forte (Additional support can come from the mentor's own network or the IEEW team can help you find the right person.)*
- *Providing coaching on presenting a plan*





Mentorship Expectations

For the Mentor

- *Ultimately, we ask each mentor for a three-month commitment to the mentee(s).*
- *Commit to a conversation once per week during the in-country course.*
- *Provide support, advice, and guidance to the mentee(s) via email, Skype, Signal, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, or whatever communication platform works best.*
- *Provide IEEW with occasional reports summarizing the mentorship process.*
- *Bring in co-mentors (e.g. colleagues) to assist with specific skills. (Optional)*
- *Approval for IEEW to feature your mentorship experience in social media or marketing materials. (Optional)*
- *Attend IEEW Leadership Development for a deeper immersion into the program. (Optional)*

For the Mentee

The PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS mentorship program is mentee driven: **You, as the mentee, must take the initiative and do the legwork in the relationship.**

This is part of your learning process. IEEW will share your application and biography with the mentor prior to introduction, but **you** are responsible for reaching out to your mentor and getting the conversation started. You should not expect answers from your mentor. Rather, the mentor is there to help you think through options, formulate a plan, and ultimately make decisions for yourself. Consider mentorship as an opportunity to look more closely at yourself, become more self-aware, and take responsibility for your life's direction.

Here is some information you might consider discussing with your mentor at the beginning:

- *Your short- and long-term objectives and goals and your personal priorities*
- *Your expectations for the PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS program and what you want to learn through the mentorship*
- *Your mentor's strengths and in what areas your mentor can help you most*
- *What your career journey up to today has been*
- *Your plan for the next six months*

Later, you can delve deeper into the conversation with topics such as:

- *This week, we talked about this business concept, and I have questions I would like to ask that pertain to the topic...*
- *These are the projects I would like to implement in my business...*
- *Do you have any real life examples of how you have worked through an issue like this...*

Tips for a Successful Mentorship Experience

The level of success realized from mentorship greatly depends on attitude and commitment.

- *Prepare information on yourself and your business in advance of meeting with them.*
- *Establish mutual trust and understanding.*
- *Respect each other's time by being available during agreed times.*
- *Prepare your questions for your mentor in advance of your time with them.*
- *Exercise confidentiality by keeping information that is shared between the two of you.*
- *Practice empathy and understanding of each other.*
- *Encourage your mentee in what they are doing well.*
- *Express gratitude for your mentor's time.*

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-Laurie Johnson, Phoenix, AZ

"The opportunity to collaborate with a female entrepreneur in Rwanda has broadened my daily business awareness and expanded my knowledge."

-Cathy Cruzan, Edmond, OK

Additional Information & References

Business and Mentorship Tools Cultural Considerations

- IBM Small Business Toolkit:
https://www.ibm.com/ibm/responsibility/sme_toolkit.shtml
- Mentoring in Entrepreneurship Support: Some Basics:
https://www.kauffman.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Kauffman_Issue-Brief_Mentoring-in-Entrepreneurship_2020.pdf

Cultural Considerations

PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS mentees and mentors come from diverse backgrounds and have different experiences. As you prepare to interact with someone from a different culture, it is important to know some basics about communication and perspectives.

- Afghanistan Daily Life and Social Customs:
<https://www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Daily-life-and-social-customs>
- Afghan Culture: <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/afghan-culture/afghan-culture-family>
- The Culture of Rwanda: <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-culture-of-rwanda.html>
- Rwandan Culture and Traditions: <https://www.visitrwanda.com/interests/rwandan-culture-and-traditions/>
- American Culture: <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/american-culture/american-culture-communication>

Security

For your safety and security, we ask that personal information related to finances not be shared. It is not appropriate for a mentee to request funds be sent from a mentor. No trips to visit a mentor or mentee should be planned without first consulting with IEEW staff.