

**Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women and Bank of America Announce Partnership to Advance Women Entrepreneurs in Rwanda and Afghanistan**  
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The Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women (IEEW) and Bank of America today announced a partnership to support women entrepreneurs in Rwanda and Afghanistan.

This Smart News Release features multimedia. View the full release here:

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Since its inception 10 years ago, more than 600 women entrepreneurs from Rwanda and Afghanistan have graduated from IEEW's PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS® program. The initiative provides training, strategic planning support and mentorship to equip women to grow their businesses and strengthen their communities. Since the program launched, 80 percent of the women are still in business today, creating 13,000 jobs that preserve and bring sustainable and profitable businesses to their communities, advancing economic growth and stability in these regions.

"Women's economic empowerment is a driver of economic growth around the world that we are committed to support," said Andrea Smith, chief administrative officer, Bank of America. "Partnering with IEEW is another great example of how we're able to invest directly in the women entrepreneurs who are doing so much to create opportunity for themselves and their communities."

In addition to receiving one-on-one mentoring, new trainees will attend the PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS training boot camp in Dallas July 10–16. There, they will receive instruction on topics including applying for loans, human resources best practices and other important business skills. At the training, Bank of America will provide financial management expertise to help coach the women entrepreneurs on specific business goals and challenges.

"Partnering with Bank of America during our 10th year of global impact provides us with the financial engine to assist more women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan and Rwanda," said Dr. Terry Neese, founder and CEO, IEEW. "Their global financial focus is critical to PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS's mission of empowering women economically, socially and politically, and their extensive experience in raising the status of women through similar partnerships offers new opportunities for women around the world and the organizations that serve them. We are proud to welcome Bank of America to our team."

Bank of America's partnership with IEEW is just one example that demonstrates the company's ongoing commitment to women's economic empowerment and leadership through external partnerships and internal programs for women employees including:

- Earlier this week, Bank of America was recognized as a leader in the first Bloomberg Financial Services Gender-Equality Index (BFGEI), reinforcing the company's position as a global leader in gender equality and supporting women in the workplace.
- In partnership with the [Tory Burch Foundation Capital Program](#), Bank of America provided capital for more than \$10 million in affordable loans to nearly 450 women business owners since 2014, and announced an expansion of \$20 million over the next two years. These loans are administered through Community Development Financial Institutions in each of the program's markets.
- To create economic opportunity for women entrepreneurs around the world, Bank of America partners with [Vital Voices](#) and the [Cherie Blair Foundation](#) to connect nearly 2,000 women entrepreneurs from more than 80 countries with mentors – 200 of whom are mentored by Bank of America employees.

#### About IEEW

The Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women, started in 2006, is an Oklahoma City based 501(c)3 non-profit with a mission to empower women to grow their businesses, pursue greater entrepreneurial ventures and become more active public policy advocates. The Institute accomplishes this mission by focusing on education, mentorship and coaching women in the United States and abroad who are seeking to acquire entrepreneurial skills to help start and grow a business. IEEW works with a network of mentors,

corporate sponsors, and private donors across the United States to accomplish its work. To learn more visit our [website](#).

#### About Bank of America Environmental, Social and Governance

At Bank of America, we are focused on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors as critical to fulfilling our core purpose of making people's financial lives better. A commitment to growing our business responsibly is embedded in every aspect of our company, from our policies and practices to our services, products, governance and employee benefits. An important part of that commitment is forming strong partnerships across sectors, including nonprofit organizations serving community needs, bringing our collective networks and expertise to achieve greater impact. We're proud of our employees' volunteer efforts, support of diversity and inclusion, and environmental and social responsibility. Across our company, we're focused on simplifying banking and investing, advancing better money habits and making an impact in communities around the world. Learn more at [www.bankofamerica.com/about](http://www.bankofamerica.com/about) and follow us on Twitter at [@BankofAmerica](https://twitter.com/BankofAmerica).

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