SPRING is a business accelerator programme funded by DFID, USAID and DFAT. It works with businesses to develop products that impact girls’ lives in 9 countries.

Coffey is the independent evaluator of SPRING. Coffey’s Business Performance Evaluation is part of the overall evaluation and examines the effects of SPRING on business performance. It also looks at how businesses are reaching adolescent girls.

Kenya is home to about 10 million unregistered female-owned microenterprises. Many of these women lack access to credit, have minimal asset ownership, and are financially illiterate.

Cherehani Africa is a social enterprise pursuing the financial inclusion of female microentrepreneurs. It offers productive asset loans in underserved markets across Kenya and uses mobile phone-based technology to provide clients with credit and financial literacy content. Cherehani uses financial solidarity groups or chamas as its route to market.

SPRING Prototype and Business Goals

By digitising operations, Cheherani moved away from paper-based systems and provided staff with better, more accurate, client relevant information. Vuka, the SPRING prototype, enables Cherehani to better understand its customers through data pooling. It is a combination of:

- **Mobile app**: a customer interface where individuals can access their current loan portfolio, credit history, and additional Cherehani products and services.

- **CRM platform**: an internal database collating Cherehani customers’ data. Staff can track the number of customers, group portfolios, repayments, and overdue loans.

- **Financial education content**: An online “library” of personalised financial literacy information. It will be supplemented by interactive content and market information delivered through WhatsApp.

SPRING Support

**Business Focused Support**

SPRING offered branding, digital design, and research support. Through research, Cherehani was able to better understand their clients, as well as refine and tailor their products and services. They also became more aware of their competitors.

**Financial Support**

Cherehani utilised SPRING’s investment readiness support to create a financial model, pitch deck and business plan. Prototype funding allowed them to test the model in the market on smartphones.

**Girl Focused Support**

Cherehani had a strong girl focus before SPRING. But cumbersome manual processes meant its reach was limited. SPRING helped the business improve its understanding of girls as a viable target market to increase its reach.
Overcoming Challenges

There is potential to enlarge the Cherehani platform and offer assistance to other financial institutions to service their accounts. However, Cherehani Africa still faces some challenges:

- Legislation means Cherehani is not able to reach girls below the age of 18.
- Physical isolation and the need to travel into town to register smartphones is a barrier to reaching rural girls.
- Smartphone access in Kenya is limited and there is often a lack of connectivity.
- Chamas are sometimes reluctant to include younger girls due to perceived financial immaturity.

Further Reading