

# MARY KAY

## ADVANCING WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP



*FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION  
SPECIAL REPORT*

**WOMEN'S  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
ACCELERATOR**

## WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACCELERATOR

Mary Kay Inc. stands at the **forefront of change**, not only championing the cause of women but also recognizing the immense power women entrepreneurs hold in **shaping our global and local economies and societies**, and driving meaningful change in sustainability efforts. The Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator has taken our mission of **enriching women's lives one step further**.

MARY KAY

# CONTENTS

- 04** Introducing the Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator *Powered by Mary Kay*
- 07** WEA Genesis  
*The SDG Pilot Village Project*
- 08** How does WEA Work?
- 09** WEA Flagship Programs  
*Powered by Mary Kay*
- Education**
- 09** *Online Entrepreneurship Certificate Programme*
- 10** *Online Learning Modules for Women Entrepreneurs*
- 11** *Gender-responsive Procurement and Investment (GRP&I) Training for Women Entrepreneurs and Private Sector*
- Capital**
- 12** *Women's Entrepreneurship EXPO*
- Networks & Markets**
- 13** *WEA Digital Innovation Challenge for Women Entrepreneurs*
- Advocacy**
- 14** *Global Advocacy for Gender-responsive Procurement (GRP)*
- 15** *Women Entrepreneurship Research for Policy Recommendation for Gender Equality in Enterprise Development in Latin America*
- 16** *High-Level Event: WEA 4th Anniversary Event on Inclusive Capital For Women Entrepreneurs*
- 17** WEA at a Glance  
*Contacts*

# INTRODUCING WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACCELERATOR

*POWERED BY MARY KAY*



*In 2019, Mary Kay announced the Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator groundbreaking partnership at the UN General Assembly (UNGA 74).*

**Since 1963**, investing in women entrepreneurship has been the core of the mission of Mary Kay: whether it's supporting our Independent Beauty Consultants as they develop and sustain their business, or procuring services from women-owned companies, we are committed to creating a pathway for women to thrive.

After decades of work empowering women, moved by a deep sense of responsibility and the belief that when more women participate in the economy, everyone wins, we wanted to take our mission of **"Enriching Women's Lives"** to the next level.

**In 2019**, recognizing that the whole private sector benefits from creating more resilient and inclusive economies and societies, Mary Kay joined forces with six United Nations agencies to form a



groundbreaking multi-stakeholder partnership: the **Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator**, also known as "WEA." Together we committed to help alleviate the barriers to women's entrepreneurship and to empower 5 million women around the world by 2030.

Through the inception of the WEA multi-partnership, Mary Kay helped carve a new path of intervention for the private sector aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 17 (SDG 17): "Partnerships for the goals."

Mary Kay provided the seed funding to support WEA in its incubation and early development phases, including the rollout of game-changing programs around the world.

## VISION:

Women Entrepreneurship has a Multiplier Impact in Advancing the SDGs.

## MISSION:

Inspire, Educate and Empower 5 Million Women around the World by 2030.

# WHEN MORE WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN THE ECONOMY, **EVERYONE WINS.**



In the U.S., women-owned businesses are growing at more than double the rate of all other firms, **contributing nearly \$3 trillion to the economy and being directly responsible for 23 million jobs.**

*Source: The World Bank.*



Giving women entrepreneurs access to equal economic opportunities could add **13 trillion to the global GDP by 2030.**

*Source: The World Bank.*



Women entrepreneurs tend to **reinvest up to 90% of their earnings in their families and communities**, thus linking inclusive economic growth directly to development.

*Source: International Trade Centre.*

## WEA FOUNDING PARTNERS:

- **Mary Kay Inc.**
- **United Nations partners:** International Labour Organization (ILO), International Trade Centre (ITC), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Global Compact (UNGC) and UN Women.

## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS AT REGIONAL AND COUNTRY LEVEL:

- Organizations and institutions from the public sector, incl. government representatives and public policy makers
- Private sector incl. global corporations and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)
- Investor networks and financial institutions
- Civil society organizations (CSOs) incl. women's business organizations, women entrepreneurs, women's advocates
- Academia
- Donors



# A PARTNERSHIP VEHICLE OF UNIQUE MAGNITUDE

Through WEA, Mary Kay has incepted a groundbreaking multi-partnership where the United Nations, public and private sectors, civil society organizations, policy experts and investors work together to transform the world WITH and FOR women entrepreneurs.



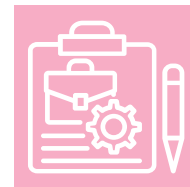
**POWERFUL ASSOCIATION**  
WEA leverages the expertise and convening power of six UN agencies to help accelerate the creation of the enabling ecosystem for women entrepreneurs.



**GLOBAL REACH**  
WEA has boots on the ground in 170 countries through its global, regional, and local partners.



**UNIQUE EXPOSURE**  
So far WEA has engaged 110+ partners in global and regional high-level events, offering speaking engagements, board seats and networking opportunities for women leaders and male allies.



**STRATEGIC PORTFOLIO OF PROGRAMS**  
WEA is making a difference through its strategic portfolio of programs and trainings, providing solutions to the most pressing needs of women entrepreneurs.

## WEA IMPACT

WEA has engaged **600,000 women** through **32 programs**, trainings and activities and sensitized over **seven million people** to our mission.

*Data as of December 2023.*

# WEA GENESIS

## THE SDG PILOT VILLAGE PROJECT: UNLEASHING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS



Picture: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers.

In 2017, Mary Kay entered a partnership with UNDP China in collaboration with the China Women's Development Foundation, the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges, the Women's Federation of Yunnan Province and Yongren County Government and launched the **"SDG Pilot Village Project"** in Waipula, Yunnan Province, China. The pilot project is a "Women-focused Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development" designed to address the structural barriers to women's labor market.

With access to finance, entrepreneurial and leadership skill building, advocacy, and multi-stakeholder engagement at his core, this high impact initiative became the inspiration for WEA.

CONTRIBUTED DIRECTLY TO  
12 OF THE 17 GOALS



## IMPACT

- In less than **four years**, the poverty rate in the village dropped from **23% to 0%** (October 2020).
- From 2017 to 2021, the SDG Village Pilot Project accelerated the implementation of **12 of the 17 SDGs** through catalyzing the development impact of women entrepreneurship.



WATCH THE FILM



READ THE IMPACT REPORT  
(Phase 1)

# HOW DOES WEA WORK?

WEA truly brings a new model of global sustainable impact focused on alleviating the most critical obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs through skill building, access to finance, networks and markets and local and global advocacy.

Over the past four years, Mary Kay has powered a series of innovative and impactful programs and trainings cutting across national, cultural and language barriers.



## EDUCATION

**BARRIER:** Women still too often face many challenges to access and master the ever-evolving professional skillset to start or grow their business.

**SOLUTION:** WEA has developed a robust series of free trainings developed by the best experts from academic and business fields to meet their specific needs. At the core of our portfolio is the **WEA Online Certificate Programme** developed by ITC SheTrades. In 2023 International Telecommunication Union launched a **series of sectorial trainings on priority topics** ranging from textile to green entrepreneurship and digital literacy, with more to come in 2024.



## NETWORKS AND MARKETS

**BARRIER:** Women-owned and led businesses must overcome multifaceted challenges hindering their participation in the global economy.

**SOLUTION:** WEA introduces women entrepreneurs to local and global networking and market expansion opportunities through a roster of corporate partners, government agencies and financial institutions. In 2023, the **WEA Digital Innovation Challenge** conducted by ITU received 250 applications from women-led startups from 54 countries.



## CAPITAL

**BARRIER:** Companies founded solely by women garnered just 2.1% of the total capital invested in venture-backed startups in the US in 2022. Globally, women entrepreneurs face a US \$1.7 trillion finance gap.

**SOLUTION:** WEA provides them access to venture capital, loan opportunities, and investor networks. With more than 3,000 participants and more than 760 companies engaged, the **Women's Entrepreneurship EXPO** led by UN Women in Europe and Central Asia has been so successful that it is going to be scaled to other regions.



## ADVOCACY

**BARRIER:** Women entrepreneurs need an enabling ecosystem to thrive.

**SOLUTION:** WEA serves as an advocacy platform, encouraging policy shifts and legal reform in support of women entrepreneurship at all levels. This includes in-country **Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) assessments** with ILO, global advocacy for gender-responsive procurement and inclusive supply chains with UN Women and UN Global Compact and participation in entrepreneurship alliances and action coalitions.



# WEA FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

## POWERED BY MARY KAY



## EDUCATION

### PROGRAM: ONLINE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME

PARTNER: INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE SHETRADES

LAUNCH: 2022

This unique program was developed by combining best practices and courses from the world's most trusted entrepreneurship curricula, professors, and professionals. Designed to be universal, it also includes the needs of specific demographics and global communities.

It is comprised of **seven certificates** covering the key stages of business development and **27 interactive modules** enriched with **200+ videos** teaching women entrepreneurs or aspiring entrepreneurs the necessary digital skills to design and set up economically viable businesses. It is free of charge with no barrier to entry. Training is offered in English, Spanish and French.

Guided, self-paced with additional mentoring opportunities available for in-person learning.

**LEARN MORE:** Access the training on the [SheTrades website](#), the SheTrades app on



WOMEN'S  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
ACCELERATOR



## CERTIFICATES

1. Deciding to Become an Entrepreneur
2. Developing the Idea – Business Ideation
3. Business Modelling
4. Pitching the Business
5. Funding the Venture
6. Building up the Team
7. Setting up the Business



Upon completion learners receive a certificate from the World Trade Organization, International Trade Centre, and WEA **in collaboration with Mary Kay.**

## WEA IMPACT

- **In just 3 months, 2,011 women completed certificates.**

Source: ITC SheTrades Donor report, June 2022.

Data as of March 2022.



MARY KAY

# WEA FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

## POWERED BY MARY KAY



## EDUCATION

### PROGRAM: ONLINE LEARNING MODULES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

PARTNER: INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

LAUNCH: 2023-2024

This series of free online trainings aims to address the gender digital skills gap by providing women and girls from the least developed countries access to free, high-quality learning modules required to advance in the digital economy.

**It comprises of four blocks totaling 17 online modules and is focused on the most pressing needs of women entrepreneurs:**

- **General digital skills** training for aspiring and experienced women entrepreneurs;
- **Digital green entrepreneurship skills** for women entrepreneurs;
- **Sectorial skills** for women entrepreneurs in the textile and apparel sector;
- **Management skills** for women entrepreneurs in technology.



## WEA IMPACT

The Green and Digital Entrepreneurship for Women online training is currently open with 237 participants from 52 countries including Algeria, Ecuador, India, Egypt, Iran, Switzerland and the U.S. 51% of participants are 18 to 35-year-old.

Source: ITU Data as of 10/1/2023.

# WEA FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

## POWERED BY MARY KAY



## EDUCATION

### PROGRAM: GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROCUREMENT AND INVESTMENT (GRP&I) PILOT TRAINING FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND PRIVATE SECTOR

PARTNER: UN WOMEN

LAUNCH: 2021-ONGOING ROLLOUT

This innovative pilot training on Gender-responsive Procurement and Investment (GRP&I) was developed by UN Women for WEA to increase the capacities of both women entrepreneurs and corporate procurement teams.

**Pillar 1:** Building procurement capacities of women entrepreneurs to compete for bidding opportunities with public and private sectors.

**Pillar 2:** Strengthening the capabilities of the companies to establish policies and practices and design initiatives to buy from women-owned businesses and invest back in their businesses.

Launched in Türkiye with companies such L'Oréal and Coca-Cola participating, the GRP&I training is now being disseminated through the Europe and Central Asia region through the Women's Entrepreneurship EXPO.

## DID YOU KNOW?

While GRP is a growing practice, it is far from universal. Globally, **one in three businesses are owned by women**, but women only win an estimated **one percent of the procurement spend** of large corporations and States.

**1 in 3**  
businesses are women-owned yet  
the procurement they get is  
**LESS THAN 1%**

Sources: World Bank (2020). Enterprise Surveys, World Bank Gender Data Portal cited by World Bank Blogs (2020) Women entrepreneurs needed – stat! Vazquez and Sherman (2014). Cited by UN Women (2017) The Power of Procurement: How to source from women-owned businesses.

## WEA IMPACT



- In November-December 2021: **73 companies** joined the study on GRP conducted by IPSOS in Türkiye with Kagider, the association of women's entrepreneurs with the support of Mary Kay.
- In 2022-2023, **43 local and global companies** received the GRP&I training delivered by WEA.

# WEA FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

## POWERED BY MARY KAY



## CAPITAL

### PROGRAM: WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP EXPO

**PARTNERS:** UN WOMEN REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA WITH PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS, THE EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT AND YILDIZ HOLDING

**EXPO LAUNCHES:** 2021, 2022, 2023

The EXPO is a one-year long entrepreneurial journey for women entrepreneurs, bringing together entrepreneurs, investors, and business partners through a series of activities including **skill building through bootcamps, acceleration programs and mentoring sessions** to support women to start and grow their businesses.

Expo culminates with a **Capital Quest** event held to give women entrepreneurs a springboard to attract investment by pitching their early-stage startups and business plans to investors.

- **On July 5-7, 2023, 24** women entrepreneurs from 12 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, and Türkiye) pitched their business ideas ranging from food and beverages, textiles and crafts to online services to investors and other private sector representatives.

**LEARN MORE:** [unwomenexpo.org](http://unwomenexpo.org)



**WOMEN'S  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
ACCELERATOR**

## DID YOU KNOW?

The two-day live EXPO is the **biggest networking event for women-led businesses** in Europe and Central Asia.

- In the Europe region **women account for less than a third of entrepreneurs.**
- Even though **women entrepreneurs get half the investment capital compared to men**, their companies deliver **twice as much revenue for each dollar invested.**

Source: EXPO UN Women Europe and Central Asia.

## EXPO IMPACT

- **1700 women applied** to the call for application incl. a training need assessment form
- **232 women entrepreneurs** joined PWC Bootcamps
- **67 women participated** in Acceleration Programs
- **23 selected women pitched** their business to investors in July 2023
- **6 satellite expos** held in countries prior to the regional EXPO in Istanbul (Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, Türkiye, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine)
- **111 companies** engaged
- **3,000 participants/visitors**

Source: EXPO 2022. UN Women.

**MARY KAY**



# WEA FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

## POWERED BY MARY KAY



## NETWORKS AND MARKETS

**PROGRAM: WEA DIGITAL INNOVATION CHALLENGE FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

**PARTNER: INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION**

**LAUNCH: 2022 COMPETITION: 2023**



Recognizing the intersection between innovation, technology, the digital space, education and equal opportunities, Mary Kay launched the WEA Digital Innovation Challenge for Women Entrepreneurs conducted by International Telecommunication Union.

The aim of the WEA Challenge is to address the barriers to women's entrepreneurship and to create solutions in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Challenge received **250 submissions from women-owned and -led startups in 54 countries**. 10 digital best practices and three special winners were announced by Mary Kay during the Commission on Status of Women (CSW67) in March 2023.

The winners gained access to the ITC's Digital Innovation Eco-System Program where they received capacity-building and specialized mentorship.

## TOP THREE WINNERS

**Tiny Totos** is a Kenyan social enterprise working to ensure quality childcare.

**Health Innovation Exchange (HIEx)** identifies challenges faced by health systems and connects innovators with key health ecosystem actors primarily in Africa and Asia.

**Gwiji for Women** identifies, vets, trains, and empowers women from lower socio-economic backgrounds as casual cleaners by connecting them with prospective clients through a mobile application.

## WEA IMPACT

**10 women-owned; -led businesses** benefited from media exposure, networking opportunities with investors, hours of coaching by 1919 Investment Counsel, skill building and mentorship through ITU's **Digital Innovation Eco-System Program**.



# WEA FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

## POWERED BY MARY KAY



## ADVOCACY

**PROGRAM: GLOBAL ADVOCACY FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROCUREMENT (GRP)**

**PARTNER: UN WOMEN AND UN GLOBAL COMPACT**

**LAUNCH: 2021-2022**

WEA launched three initiatives aiming at strengthening capacities of corporate teams from all the sectors to establish gender-responsive procurement policies and practices:

**1**

Establishment of a **GRP community of practice** (GRP CoP) with the private sector through a webinar series, a survey, and multiple interviews with key stakeholders.

### WEA IMPACT

**6 companies** participated to Community of Practice webinars: Mary Kay, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Camusat Kenya, Bristol Myers Squibb, IBM, and Procter & Gamble.

**2**

Publication of an **Advocacy Brief** by UN Women for WEA titled: "Procurement Strategic Value: Why Gender-responsive Procurement Makes Business Sense."

### WEA IMPACT

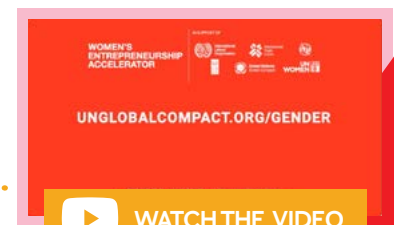
**Report: 374 stakeholders** consulted incl. **70 stakeholders** from the private sector. **Seven case studies.** Disseminated to 4,000+ subscribers of all UN Global Compact Local Networks, the Target Gender Equality Newsletter, UN Women 30+ regional and country offices.

**3**

Creation of a **GRP Advocacy Video** by UN Global Compact for the private sector.

### WEA IMPACT

**GRP video** shared with the membership of UNGC (**16,000 companies** incl. **6,000+ MSMEs**).



# WEA FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

## POWERED BY MARY KAY



## ADVOCACY

**PROGRAM: WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA REGION**

**PARTNER: INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION**

**LAUNCH: 2021-2022**

### MEXICO

Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) assessment in Mexico City focused on the commerce and industry sectors. The assessment included a series of 19 actionable recommendations to address the institutional gaps that exist for women entrepreneurs.

#### WEA IMPACT

- **15 organizations stakeholders** including employer organizations (e.g **CONCAMIN**, **CANAIVE**), women entrepreneurs associations, representatives from relevant government programs, service providers and academia.
- **41 women entrepreneurs** benefitted from **4 workshops** held to sensitize government actors responsible for **SME promotion on gender gaps in entrepreneurship**.



[CLICK HERE TO READ THE REPORT](#)

### BRAZIL

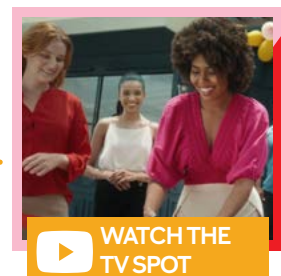
For WEA, ILO worked with **Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial (SENAI)** to advocate for women's entrepreneurship development through a package of communication and awareness-raising campaigns, capacity-building workshops, and events.

#### WEA IMPACT

- **National pledge** for women entrepreneurship by **SENAI** signed by **221 stakeholders**.
- **2 national campaigns** (Radio in Mato Grosso, TV spots) reaching **5.6M people**, with **87,935 views**.



[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



[WATCH THE TV SPOT](#)



**WOMEN'S  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
ACCELERATOR**

**MARY KAY**

# WEA FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

## POWERED BY MARY KAY



### ADVOCACY

#### HIGH-LEVEL EVENT: WEA 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EVENT FOCUSED ON INCLUSIVE CAPITAL FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

**PARTNERS:** WEA-PARTICIPATING UN AGENCIES; YILDIZ HOLDING, WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ACT INITIATIVE (WE ACT) OF THE WOMEN20 (G20/W20) COUNTRIES

**DATE:** UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNGA78) - 2023



▶ WATCH THE EVENT

On September 21, 2023, in conjunction with the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, WEA held a high-level event marking four-year anniversary milestone titled “Inclusive Capital: Empowering Women Entrepreneurs on a Global Scale” bringing together leaders to spotlight this critical issue for women entrepreneurs.

Major stakeholders from the **World Bank (WEFI)**, **OECD**, **ITU**, **UNDP**, **UNGC**, **G20/W20**, **BPW (Business and Professional Women)** and **FCEM (Femmes Chefs d’Entreprises Mondiales)**, **Global Invest Her**, converged to explore innovative avenues of collaboration, propelling the cause of women’s entrepreneurship to new horizons.

The event provided an opportunity for all stakeholders within the women’s entrepreneurship ecosystem to discuss women’s challenges to access finance, emphasize the importance of inclusive investing, and generate

institutional and corporate commitments to better serve women businesses through applying a gender-inclusive lens to their decision-making.

In a resounding display of global solidarity and empowerment, the WEA event brought together 570 on-site attendees and hundreds virtually around the world.

The milestone event was followed by an invitation-only dinner held in the UN Delegates Dining Room supported by **1919 Investment Counsel** where WEA was pitched to investors.



**Deborah Gibbins, Chief Finance and Chief Operating Officer at Mary Kay, inceptor of WEA, explained the critical importance of private sector engagement and inclusive capital in support of women entrepreneurs.**





# WEA AT A GLANCE

**1 SOLE  
FOCUS**

ADVANCING WOMEN  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**110+**

PARTNERS ON THE GROUND

**170**

COUNTRIES

**12+**

IMPACT PROGRAMS &  
TRAININGS

**5 MILLION**

WOMEN EMPOWERED BY 2030

**6 UN  
AGENCIES**

FOR A UNIQUE CONVENING POWER

**600,000+**

WOMEN ALREADY BENEFITTED  
THROUGH WEA INTERVENTIONS

**4 PRIORITY  
AREAS**

FOR A TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT

## CONTACTS

### Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator

Merâl Güzel

*WEA Secretariat at UN Women*

[meral.guzel@unwomen.com](mailto:meral.guzel@unwomen.com)

### Mary Kay Inc.

Virginie Naigeon-Malek

*Public Affairs, CSR & Corporate Communications Department*

[virginie.naigeon-malek@mkcorp.com](mailto:virginie.naigeon-malek@mkcorp.com)

**LEARN MORE**

[WE-ACCELERATE.COM](http://WE-ACCELERATE.COM)

**FOLLOW US**



# MARY KAY®

**16251 Dallas Parkway  
Addison, Texas 75001**

For general inquiries, please contact:  
+1 972-687-5300

For media inquiries, please contact:  
+1 972-687-5332  
[media@mkcorp.com](mailto:media@mkcorp.com)

For more information, please visit:  
[www.marykayglobal.com](http://www.marykayglobal.com)