



Joy Catherine Birabwa | Photo by Will Boase

Introducing Joy and Sai

Joy runs After School Hub, an educational after-school programme based in Kampala, Uganda, which gives young people the opportunity to experiment, create and learn from their peers. As a mother of three, she found that schools did not offer many extracurricular activities, so she decided to create a space where children could develop their social and practical skills. The ethos of her After School Hub is 'learning beyond the classroom'.

Joy joined the Mentoring Women in Business Programme after struggling to move her enterprise forward while also working a full-time job and caring for her children. She was matched with Sai, a senior engineer at Qualcomm in the United States.

Relationship focus

The pair quickly built a strong relationship as Sai helped Joy to put plans and strategies in place to energise and grow her enterprise. They started by piloting a weekend programme of cooking classes from Joy's home. With Sai's support, Joy wrote a business plan, created a marketing strategy, distributed flyers to local schools and built a social media presence.

Joy's enterprise quickly secured local media attention and her weekend programmes became fully booked. Recognising the opportunity for growth, Joy moved to larger premises and developed a new 12-day holiday programme offering a wider range of activities, including sports and lessons on farming and basic hygiene practices. Keen for the children to interact with others from different backgrounds, Joy also facilitated volleyball games with children living in poorer areas.



Photo by Joy Catherine Birabwa / After School Hub

Joy has seen significant expansion during her time with Sai. When it started, just four children attended her after-school programme; now each holiday camp attracts over 25 children. She works with five part-time employees to run her camps and is looking to bring more seasonal employees on board for her upcoming programmes. She is developing partnerships with local organisations to offer additional activities such as training on cyber security for teenagers.

Joy's reflections

Joy believes that Sai has been instrumental in helping her build confidence and overcome her fear of failure. Sai also helped her to see the bigger picture and explore new options. She said, *"Without her, I would not have been able to move out of my shell, I would not have been able to give myself a chance to do what I love. I felt her cheer from miles away."*

Sai's reflections

Sai said she loved working with Joy and was inspired by her hard work and dedication. Mentoring Joy has taught her the value of being open to new ideas and remaining determined in the face of challenges. When Sai experiences difficulties at work, she often thinks of Joy and her tenacity.