Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

Canada

Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship: Creating a gender-responsive entrepreneurial ecosystem

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1 NO POVERTY | 5 GENDER EQUALITY | 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

UNITED NATIONS ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)

Key principle: Gender equality and the empowerment of women considered as the most effective approach to promote inclusive economic growth, reduce poverty and make progress towards the achievement of SDGs.

Six Action Areas:

1. Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women,
2. Human Dignity,
3. Growth That Works for Everyone,
4. Environment and Climate Action,
5. Inclusive Governance, and
6. Peace and Security.

What this means: Gender equality and empowerment of women placed at the center of all advocacy, investment and partnership initiatives.

Growth that Works for Everyone Action Area

Aligns with SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth

Aims to :

- Promote greater financial inclusion for women, and equal access to capital, markets, digital technology and business development services;
- Promote women's economic rights and access to decent work;
- Support technical and vocational training for women;
- Increasing the economic leadership of women at all levels.
- Helping to address unpaid work and the disproportionate burden of care shouldered by women; and
- Improving economic opportunities for rural women and strengthening their resilience.

Framing barriers faced by women entrepreneurs

- Limited access to assets and restricted financial inclusion of women;
- Limited access to markets and business-oriented networks for women SMEs;
- Large proportion of women-led MSMEs are in informal and less profitable sectors;
- Discriminatory socio-cultural norms deny women's economic rights;
- Laws safeguarding women's equal rights are not always applied;
- Low digital literacy and access and use of ICT, especially for rural women; and
- COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating the barriers faced by women entrepreneurs.

Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship (CWE): project scope

A five-year (2018-2023) project focused on advancing women's entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific region through three interconnected pillars of influence

Creating an enabling ecosystem for women

Policy & Advocacy

Enhancing access & use of financial services

Innovative Financing

Strengthening use of ICT & digital solutions

ICT & Business Skills



Highlights of results to date – Cambodia

Policy and Advocacy





COVID-19 Response

Policy guidelines on recovery for women entrepreneurs

Policies & Regulations

Agreements with Ministry of Industry Science Technology and Innovation; Ministry of Women Affairs; National Committee ESCAP

Capacity Development of Women Entrepreneurs

Women's Entrepreneurship Development Centre framework to provide training and incubation support to WEs

Partnerships

Agreements with Ministry of Industry Science Technology and Innovation; Ministry of Women Affairs; National Committee ESCAP

Governance Mechanism

National Advisory Committee:

Bringing together stakeholders e.g.: National Bank of Cambodia, Ministry of Economy and Finance

One-Roof Service (ORS)

Multi-stakeholder cooperation on establishing ORS platform and providing targeted support to women entrepreneurs

Supporting SDGs:





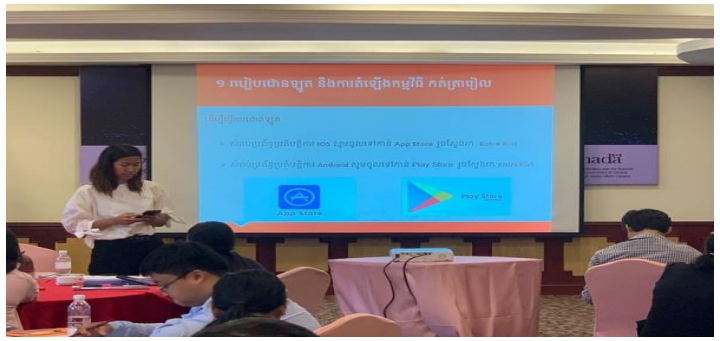


Cambodia (continued)

ICT

ICT and Financial Management

Conduct of Training of Trainers and workshops for women entrepreneurs on ICT and financial literacy and using digital devices in financial management, in partnership with **SHE Investments**



SHE Support Her Enterprise

SHE Investments

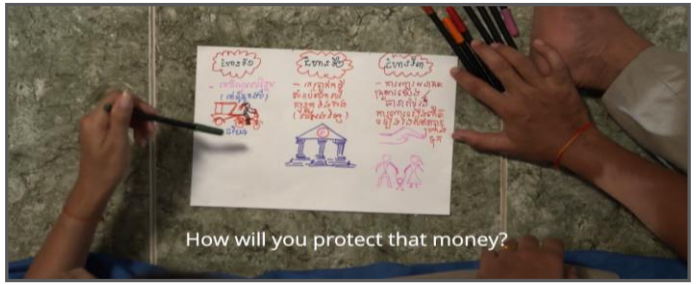
Supported by the MSME Innovation Fund, SHE Investments developed the KOTRA Riel, a financial bookkeeping app for women microenterprises

Partnership with the National Bank of Cambodia

Partnership with the National Bank of Cambodia: financial literacy campaign, uncollateralized lending study, regulator training.







Highlights of results to date: Vietnam

Policy and Advocacy





Research

Study on impact of COVID-19 on women-led MSMEs.

(Focus on Ethnic Minorities, Climate Change and Agriculture sector in 2021-2022)

Policies & Laws

Assessment of the SME Law and its implementation effectiveness for women entrepreneurs

Knowledge Portal

Digital one-stop portal for women entrepreneurs

Addressing Social Cultural & Stress Factors

Enabling psychosocial ecosystem for women entrepreneurs

Governance Mechanism

National Advisory Committee:

Enabling platform for partnerships across policy, financing and ICT, e.g.: State Bank of Viet Nam, Ecommerce Development

Partnerships

Agreement with the SME Ministry – Ministry of Planning and Investment

National Scaling Up & Sustainability

Facilitating design of new 5 yr. programme for women entrepreneurs led by the Government

Supporting SDGs:



Vietnam (continued)

ICT and Innovative Financing

E-commerce & Digital Marketing

- December 2020: ToT conducted in Hanoi, Viet Nam, with E-Commerce Development Centre

Attended by women entrepreneurs, women business support organizations, SME support centers, business incubators, lecturers from Academia



- Direct training to women entrepreneurs to be conducted by ECOMVIET in 2021
- In partnership with Kiu Global, the programme is implementing a business management platform and mobile applications to support women-owned or led MSMEs in Viet Nam, by providing MSMEs with digital tools for record-keeping, which allow them to connect with financial institutions to offer financing using the MSMEs transaction history

Lessons Learned

- Different financial tools are needed to address different types of women entrepreneurs operating in different ecosystems.
- While establishing partnerships with non-gender ministries was challenging, this approach proved an essential ingredient for advancing effective policy reforms under the project.
- Digital finance and e-commerce have allowed women-led businesses to continue to operate and trade during the pandemic, demonstrating how digital capacity empowers women.
- In-Country governance mechanisms have been instrumental in creating whole of Government approach to influence the behavior of policymakers and systematically include women entrepreneur voices in decision making.
- ESCAP's unique position in global processes and regional engagement leveraged influence to recognize women's entrepreneurship as a key catalyst for inclusive social and economic development.

Thank you




ESCAP


Training of Trainers:
Basic Financial Management &






Women MSME
Fin-Tech Innovation Fund
ESCAP
VISA