

Empowering Women Entrepreneurs and Changing Mindsets A Catalyst for Gender Equality

By

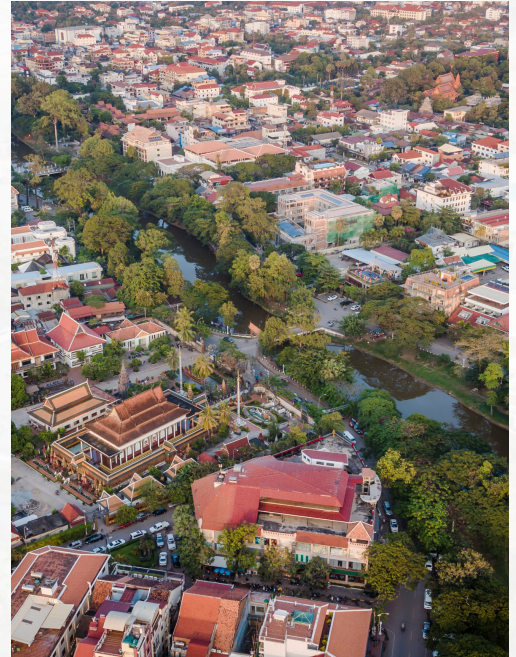
Improved Competitiveness of National Enterprises (ICONE)

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The socio-economic fabric of Cambodia has, historically, faced challenges, particularly in the private sector, where low levels of productivity, efficiency, and innovation hindered progress. The impacts of this were especially pronounced for marginalized groups, notably lower-skilled female workers and young women entering the labor market. The government, acknowledging the imperative for inclusive economic growth, embarked on a trajectory outlined in the Cambodia Industrial Development Policy (2015-2025). This policy seeks to modernize and diversify the economy, prioritizing the shift from cheap, unskilled labor to higher-value, skilled labor. A pivotal aspect of this shift involves a targeted approach to the inclusion and advancement of women in the labor market.



Siem Reap city



GIZ ICONE Annual Business Networking Event

ICONE Program: A Comprehensive Approach

The ICONE program recognizes the multifaceted challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. With a focus on northwest Cambodia, the program strategically engages in specialized activities aimed at promoting the representation of women entrepreneurs and improving access to resources for women entrepreneurs. Three key areas of activity have proven effective:

Strengthening Data-Driven Advocacy with CWEA in Siem Reap

Aligned with the principles of the German feminist development policy, the ICONE program empowers entrepreneurs through representation. Recognizing the scarcity of data on women-led enterprises, specifically in the informal sector, the program collaborates with the CWEA Siem Reap chapter to strengthen its capacities for evidence-based and data-driven advocacy. Digital literacy training, particularly in data analytics, ensures effective data collection and evaluation, providing a basis for evidence-backed campaigns. In the mid-term, this data-driven approach aims to showcase the development of challenges and needs of women entrepreneurs in northwest Cambodia to advocate strategically with the necessary data.



CWEA Siem Reap Chapter

Developing a Business Clinic - Services by Women for Women

The introduction of the Business Clinic initiative in collaboration with CWEA Siem Reap addresses the unique challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. This gender-differentiated approach tailors services to the specific needs of women-led enterprises, ensuring inclusivity and resonance. The clinic not only provides business-related services but also addresses the social dynamics within families, advocating for the individual needs of women entrepreneurs with husbands and family members. Female Khmer coaches, having navigated similar challenges, play a pivotal role in building trust and facilitating a shift in perception regarding women's roles in the business landscape.

Coaching for Women Entrepreneurs to Transform Mindsets

Recognizing the deeply ingrained societal attitudes impacting women entrepreneurs, the ICONE program introduces specialized coaching sessions. These sessions extend beyond conventional business strategies, delving into the intricacies of familial relationships. Adopting gender-transformative strategies, the coaching programs aim to shift mindsets within families, fostering an inclusive and diverse entrepreneurial landscape. The program's impact is evidenced not only in the increased confidence of women entrepreneurs but also in the changing perceptions within families.

The success of the ICONE program lies in collaboration. Colleagues, political partners, associations, and entrepreneurs have joined forces with a shared commitment to enhancing gender equality. Despite formidable challenges, from societal resistance to systemic barriers, the collective commitment of stakeholders has proven transformative. In conclusion, the ICONE program serves as a beacon in Siem Reap, where women entrepreneurs transcend their roles as mere economic agents to become agents of change. This entry is not merely a competition submission; it stands as a testament to the resilience and potential of women entrepreneurs, aligning with the principles of the German feminist development policy.



CWEA Siem Reap coaching on business development



Workshop for CWEA Battambang and Siem Reap chapter on survey creation

