



# Grow

*The Newsletter for CACCI  
Women Entrepreneurs Council*

December 2016, Volume 16

## Message from the Chairperson

*Dear Friends,*

*Wish you all a Very Happy New Year.*

*2016 has been a very exciting year for us. The first Asia Pacific Women Entrepreneur Award (APWEA) was initiated. Due to the fracture of my ankle, it was rather unfortunate that I had to miss it. Hope to meet my friends of the region this year.*

*Heartiest congratulations to the joint awardees of the APWEA held in Taipei, Taiwan and the awardees of the International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge (IWEC) Awards held in Brussels.*

*Our awardees from the region are setting an example across the globe of how successful women can be. These are women who we admire. They are also role models for other aspiring women.*

*While discussing entrepreneurial development in the region we cannot forget that women are still mainly involved in small businesses focused on handicraft, handlooms, food, fashion and other traditional services. It is only few that have recently successfully been able to move into manufacturing, construction, heavy or other industrial and non-traditional fields. However, if given a chance and support women can perform exceedingly well in different spheres of business enterprise activities as well as academics, politics, administration, and so on.*

*Our region is rich in women working in the unorganised sector of crafts, handlooms and home run enterprises. We can take this wealth of creativity and enterprise into an organised platform which is dedicated to their sustainability and scalability. They require these three basic and critical components - micro credit, entrepreneurship and empowerment, to help their growth.*

*I worked under the direction of the Hon'ble Minister Shrimati Maneka Sanjay Gandhi, Ministry of Women and Child Development, India to conceive, develop and create a unique and dynamic e -marketplace called Mahila-E-Haat. The dynamic website was launched on the 7th of March 2016. It is a direct, unique but replicable model for the financial inclusion of women from diverse economic backgrounds.*

*Mahila-E-Haat has succeeded in addressing the basic needs of the less privileged women, by providing them an alternate, supplementary, yet organised marketplace to operate from. Our hope is that this platform will give them a more dignified life and better future prospects.*

*The economic outreach provided by Mahila-E-Haat for the women vendors - primarily artisans, rural and semi -rural, has begun to help them reach their full potential, thereby witnessing extraordinary empowerment and individual self-growth of these women. Today, there are more than 400,000 women who are benefitting directly and indirectly through this initiative.*

*It would give me great pleasure in initiating a similar concept in other countries of the region and to bring them together on a similar platform.*

*Looking forward to another year of great work and new endeavours together.*

*With warm regards*

**Mukta Nandini Jain**  
**Chairperson**  
**CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council**



# CACCI Organizes the 30th Conference and Celebrates 50th Anniversary in Taipei



(Left photo) H. E. Tsai Ing-Wen, President of the Republic of China (Taiwan), delivers her Special Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 30th CACCI Conference. (Right photo) CACCI President Mr. Jemal Inaishvili emphasizes the importance of Asia in his Opening Statement.

The Confederation successfully held its 30th CACCI Conference in Taipei, Taiwan on November 23-25, 2016, with the participation of some 450 delegates composed largely of businessmen and chamber of commerce representatives from 22 Asia-Pacific countries, led by CACCI President Mr. Jemal Inaishvili from the Georgia.

Co-hosted by the Chinese International Economic Cooperation Association (CIECA) and the Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce (CNAIC), with CTBC Bank as major sponsor, this year's Conference focused on the theme "The Rise of Asia: Taking a Bigger Role in the Global Economy." It

was designed to provide CACCI members and invited experts the venue to exchange views on measures that the business sector and governments in the region can undertake to take full advantage of the opportunities offered not just by markets in the Asia-Pacific region but also by countries in other parts of the world.

The Opening Ceremony featured **H. E. Tsai Ing-Wen**, President of the Republic of China (Taiwan) as Special Guest of Honor and Speaker. Invited as Special Guest during the Welcome Dinner on November 23 was **H. E. Mr. Lin Chuan**, Premier of the Republic of China (Taiwan). **Dr. Tain-Jy Chen**, Minister, National Development Council, Republic of China (Taiwan), was the speaker at the lunch hosted by CNAIC on November 24. **H. E. Mr. Javier Ching-shan Hou**, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of China (Taiwan), was the Special Guest of Honor during the Gala Dinner on November 24.

The Taipei Conference also marked the **50th Anniversary of the Confederation**. Special activities were lined up to help commemorate this important milestone of the Confederation. One such activity was the CACCI Summit Meeting, which gathered together the presidents, chairmen and CEOs of all CACCI Primary Members primarily to: (a) review the accomplishments of the Confederation over the 50 years since its founding; (b) re-visit its vision and



(Left to right) CNAIC Chairman Mr. Por-Fong Lin, CACCI President Mr. Jemal Inaishvili, President Ms. Tsai Ing-Wen, ANA CEO Mr. Osamu Shinobe and CIECA Chairman Mr. C. Y. Wang pose for a group photo.

*Continued on page 3*

## CACCI organizes

...Continued from page 2

mission as well as its goals and objectives in light of the current conditions and recent developments in the regional and global market environment; and (c) prepare a road-map of its future direction.

As part of the commemoration of its 50th Anniversary, CACCI presented the Illustrious Distinguished Service Award to all members who had served as CACCI President. The Award was in recognition of their important contribution to the Confederation, their unwavering commitment to the CACCI objective of bringing businessmen in Asia together, and their continuing efforts to help promote regional cooperation and to further advance the interest of the region's business community.

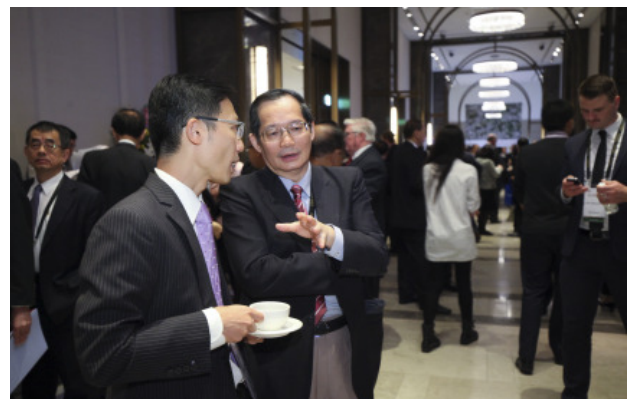
The CACCI Council, which is the organization's governing body, elected the office bearers for the term 2017-2018. Mr. Jemal Inaishvili, Member of the Council of the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was re-elected CACCI President for a second term, and seven other members were elected as Vice Presidents.

CACCI announced the winners of the 7th Local Chamber Awards, the 6th Asia-Pacific Young Entrepreneur Award, the 1st Asia-Pacific Woman Entrepreneur Award, and the 2nd Hydropower and Clean Energy Excellence Award during the Gala Dinner of the Conference held on November 24, 2016. The winners received their awards from newly elected CACCI President Mr. Jemal Inaishvili and the chairmen of the respective Board of Judges of the Awards.

CACCI endorsed a policy paper entitled "Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women." In order to fight against slowing global economic growth, CACCI called



*CACCI delegates listen to presentations made by Plenary Session Speakers.*



*Foreign and local delegates network with each other during the coffee break of the 30th CACCI Conference.*



*CACCI presents the Illustrious Distinguished Service Award to all members who had served as CACCI President.*

on the business community to be proactive in improving productivity, and said that the economic empowerment of women is one key way through which this can be achieved. This increases participation in the workforce to support aging populations, generates innovation and better-decision making through diversity and provides incentives to continue learning and contributing to society.

CACCI signed a Partnership Agreement with the Sydney Business Chamber (SBC) and the ICC World Chambers Federation (ICC-WCF) covering their collaboration in the holding of the 31st CACCI Conference next year within the framework of the ICC WCF's 10th World Chambers Congress to be co-organized by SBC on September 19-21, 2017 in Sydney, Australia. ■

## Women Entrepreneurs from Different Countries Share Their Stories at Roundtable Discussions

During the 30th CACCI Conference held on November 23-25, 2016 in Marriot Hotel Taipei, Taiwan, various parallel sectoral roundtable discussions, including women entrepreneurship, were organized that gathered government and private sector experts for dialogue on important sectoral issues.

Scheduled on the morning of November 23, the Roundtable Discussions on Women Entrepreneurs Group was chaired by Ms. Selima Ahmad, President, Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI) and was attended by some 20 local and overseas delegates. Invited panelists for this session included: (a) Ms. Lillian Chu, Senior Partner, Tsar & Tsai Law Firm (Taiwan); (b) Mrs. Magvan Oyunchimeg, CEO, Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Mongolia); and (c) Mrs. Carmel De Pio-Salvador, Managing Director, Global Carrier Phils. Inc. (Philippines).

Ms. Lillian Chu from Taiwan shared with the audience her experience and observation on women entrepreneurship. According to Ms. Chu, the primary barriers faced by women entrepreneurs in Taiwan are insufficient capacity building and limited channels of information or social networks. Women entrepreneurs need to be educated to have a keen perception on the competition in the market. In building capacity, women entrepreneurs have to understand the characteristics they possess and from there they can develop their capacity to allow them to hear all different voices and to manage uncertainty and risk in the business world. Ms. Chu pointed out that with sufficient capacity, when others see only potential down-sides, they can see potential business opportunities. The capacity will also allow women to leverage and transform their experience



*CACCI delegates listen intently to the presentations and take down notes.*



*Ms. Selima Ahmad from Bangladesh chairs the Roundtable Discussions on Women Entrepreneurs Group.*



*Ms. Lillian Chu from Taiwan speaks of new prospects for women entrepreneurs.*

(which might be deemed a disadvantage) into an advantage in competition. To sum up, having sufficient information across all sectors is crucial for women entrepreneurs to achieve their full potential.

The second panelist was Mrs. Magvan Oyunchimeg from Mongolia who used her work experience in the Chamber as an example to explain how to keep a balance between work and family. In addition, she also discussed the opportunities and challenges facing businesswomen in Mongolia.

Mrs. Carmel De Pio-Salvador from the Philippines, as Managing Director of a company, talked about her idea on how to develop women entrepreneurship. In her presentation, Mrs. Pio-Salvador encouraged ladies to dream and make their dreams come true, as it is the way to realize goals. Also, whenever changes

*Continued on page 5*

## Women Entrepreneurs

...Continued from page 4



Mrs. Magvan Oyunchimeg from Mongolia (left) and Mrs. Carmel De Pio-Salvador from the Philippines (right) share with CACCI delegates the latest developments in women entrepreneurship in their respective countries.

happen, they could be opportunities for development and growth which could help people move forward. Emphasized the importance of family and learning, Mrs. Pio-Salvador shared several examples and photos of her own company to demonstrate the best practices of a corporate.

The Roundtable Discussion on Women Entrepreneurs Group was wrapped up with the Q & A Session chaired by Ms. Selima Ahmad, during which delegates raised a few interesting questions for all invited panelists. ■



Session Chairman and invited panelists receive plaques of appreciation from CACCI Director-General Amb. Victor Tseng.

### 30th CACCI Conference

## 1st Asia-Pacific Woman Entrepreneur Award Goes to Two Joint Winners



The four-member Board of Judges gets additional information about the activities of the shortlisted nominees of the 1st Asia-Pacific Woman Entrepreneur Award through interviews and audio-visual presentations.

As part of the activities to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of CACCI in 2016, CACCI initiated the 1st Asia-Pacific Women Entrepreneur Award which aims to recognize excellent women entrepreneurs in the Asia-Pacific rim who not only are successful in their business but also advocate corporate social responsibility for the good of their country. The Award presentation ceremony was held during the Gala Dinner of the 30th CACCI Conference on November 24 in Taipei, Taiwan.

Following the preliminary judging, five finalists were selected and invited to join the final selection process that took place on November 23, in conjunction with the 30th CACCI Conference. The five finalists

*Continued on page 6*

## 1st Asia-Pacific Woman

... Continued from page 5



Finalists make presentations on their business and how they achieve their goals during the final selection process.



CACCI President Mr. Jemal Inaishvili and Board of Judges Chairman Mrs. Dhara Wijayatilake jointly present the Certificate of Achievement to all finalists.



Ms. Seyedeh Fatemeh Moghimi from Iran and Ms. Gerelmaa Ulzii-Orshikh from Mongolia, co-winners of the 1st Asia-Pacific Woman Entrepreneur Award, receive the Award Trophy during Gala Dinner.

were: (1) Ms. Selima Ahmad Vice Chairperson, Nitol Niloy Group of Industries (Bangladesh); (2) Ms. Seyedeh Fatemeh Moghimi, Managing Director, SADIDBAR Int. Trans. Co (Iran); (3) Ms. Gerelmaa Ulzii-Orshikh, Founder and President, Landex Limited Liability Company (Mongolia); (4) Ms. Undarmaa Batbayar, Founder, Bishrelt Group (Mongolia); and (5) Ms. Shireen Khan, Designer and CEO, S S Designer's World (Pakistan).

All finalists were requested to make a 15-minute summary presentation of their achievements in each of the agreed criteria, and were interviewed by the four-member Board of Judges led by its Chairman Mrs. Dhara Wijayatilake, CEO of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

The results of the final selection of the 1st Asia-Pacific Women Entrepreneur Award were announced during the Gala Dinner by the Board of Judges Chairman Mrs. Wijayatilake. Given that all finalists were outstanding, the Judges decided to give the 1st Asia-Pacific Women Entrepreneur Award to two joint winners, namely Ms. Seyedeh Fatemeh Moghimi from Iran and Ms. Gerelmaa Ulzii-Orshikh from Mongolia, in recognition of their contributions to the local community and successful business. ■

# In Asia, female entrepreneurs steer business toward social work: poll

Thomson Reuters Foundation



THOMSON REUTERS  
FOUNDATION



Across Asia, women are re-examining society's problems through a business lens, playing a more leading role than women in other regions in harnessing the power of markets to tackle poverty and social ills, according to the first experts' poll on the best countries for social entrepreneurs.

The Thomson Reuters Foundation survey of the world's 45 biggest economies found the Philippines was the country where women fared best when taking into account representation in leadership roles in social enterprises and the gender pay gap.

In fact five other spots among the top 10 ranking in the poll of nearly 900 experts in social enterprise were in Asia — Malaysia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Thailand.

Russia, Norway, and Canada rounded out the top 10, while Brazil came last and the United States fared badly in the perception poll due to concerns women are paid less than men.

Women interviewed across Asia described a fairer playing field and higher drive to put compassion over valuation as the reason women are doing so well as social entrepreneurs.

Overall the online poll, conducted between June 9 and July 15 in partnership with Deutsche Bank, the Global Social Entrepreneurship Network (GSEN) and UnLtd, foundations for social entrepreneurs, found 68 percent of experts said women are well represented in leadership in social enterprises.

A study by Deloitte in 2015 showed that women hold only 12 percent of the world's board seats, while data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union shows women account for about 23 percent of all national parliamentarians.

However, only 48 percent of experts said women in social enterprises were paid the same as men, with the United States particularly concerned on this issue.

"Whereas men want to be like Mark Zuckerberg, women want to do well for the community," said

Peetchai "Neil" Dejkraisak, who founded a rice social enterprise called Siam Organic with a female business school classmate.

"They are more compassionate and want a meaningful life. ... Social entrepreneurs are inherently driven by improving people's lives, lifting people out of poverty. Women social entrepreneurs are better at doing this than their male counterparts."

Neil and Pornthida "Palmy" Wongphatharakul began work on Siam Organic as business school students, not setting out with the aim of building a business seeking to improve society.

"The social impact was tied into the business model — the better the business, the more impact for the farmer," said Palmy.

With Thai rice farmers earning about \$12 per month per acre (0.4 hectare), they decided to home in on the U.S. market and innovations — mainly the organic purple "Jasberry" rice, high in antioxidants — to boost farmers' earnings and win health-conscious customers.

The company now works with 1,000 farmers and sold about 100 tons of its specialty rice in 2015 to Thai and U.S. buyers. Its farmers earn an average of \$180 per month per acre.

"My objective has always been whatever you do, you always have to help the farmers you promised to help. When a decision comes along, you put the farmers first," said Palmy, 31.

Indonesian former domestic worker Heni Sri Sundani never imagined she would become a social entrepreneur, using education to empower children and families in Indonesian villages.

From an impoverished farming family, in 2005 she went to Hong Kong as a maid to support her family but discovered her recruiter kept half her salary, inspiring her to use any spare time to study for a degree in entrepreneurial management.

*Continued on page 8*

## In Asia, female

... Continued from page 7

She returned home six years later with a degree and started offering free classes to children through her Smart Farmer Kids in Action movement, teaching science and also modern farming.

As the movement grew to include over 1,000 students in eight villages, she began charging a small fee to help cover running costs but most parents, who are farmers, could not afford it.

So she created another community program to help the farmers sell their products online and introduced ecotourism, boosting their incomes so they could pay for schooling.

“We hope these children stay and empower others in the villages to become educated farmers. We don’t want them to go to big cities to become exploited laborers or end up becoming human trafficking victims,” said 29-year-old Sundani.

“People I met were amazed what a woman like me can do. More women started to join me because a woman is not just a housewife,” she said, adding she raised money via crowdfunding.

Malaysian Mastura Rashid realized it was not enough to give free food to the poor when she was a volunteer handing out meals to homeless people in Kuala Lumpur as this was not sustainable.

So last year she started working with urban families who earn under \$250 a month, selling their home-cooked traditional coconut rice and spicy shrimp paste “nasi lemak” dish to office towers and petrol kiosks under “The



Nasi Lemak Project.”

“We want to help the poor by giving them direct access to the market. Malaysians love to eat, there is no other better product than nasi lemak,” Mastura, 26, said.

Mastura said Malaysia’s emerging social entrepreneur scene is competitive but a level playing field for women like her, unlike traditional businesses where women face discrimination.

Her project has received grants from two government-linked agencies set up to encourage innovation and startups.

“I don’t see gender bias in social entrepreneurship; in politics or marriages, perhaps yes,” she said. “There is no discrimination towards me as a woman social entrepreneur.”

Source: *Japan Times*, September 16, 2016 ■

---

# The art and science of harnessing women’s entrepreneurial spirit

By Bernie Magkilat

Gone are the days when only the men ruled the business world. Today, plenty of women are joining the top players and they are innovating the business world with a women’s touch.

Myren Garcia is one of these high-spirited women who braved the male-driven industry and did it on her own. But what she did was not only to put up a business; she made a difference by igniting other women’s entrepreneurial spirit through the Network of Enterprising Women (NEW) which she founded in 2006.

After working at a bank for many years, Myren realized she was not reaching her full potential. She knew she needed to create something of her own but the lack of opportunities, network and information delayed her plans. After seeing this huge hole, it sparked the idea of establishing NEW.

“I just wanted a support group to help me find

out what business I should venture in, to invite female entrepreneurs and network with suppliers and to have mentors who can teach the group the ins and outs of business,” shared Myren.

## From friends to founding members

But the simple support group who would meet up in Myren’s coffee shop then became a hub of ideas. Soon, the few group of women who were colleagues and friends of Myren from her previous work and from University of Asia and the Pacific where she graduated started organizing mini events and forums to further expand their knowledge in entrepreneurship.

These are the first members of NEW. “During those coffee conversations, my friends and I would plan on how to organize events with women entrepreneurs as the

*Continued on page 9*



## Female entrepreneurs

...Continued from page 8



(From left) Jennifer Yap of Make-Up Designory, Aliw Del Rosario of Organic Alley, Myren Garcia of Myren Business Concepts Inc., Ella Santos-Sol of Nuevo Ystilo, and Charissa Cacnio of COLQuest SME Solutions, Inc.

primary participants. It was after those several meetings that I realized my passion was organizing events.”

Soon, NEW launched the first Annual Women Entrepreneurs Conference in 2008. “Our only medium prior to the conference to advertise our activities was the internet,” Myren remembered. But that did not stop them from pushing on with the event. They promoted the event through yahoo group, forums and Multiply. Luckily, Philippine Star took notice and became their media partner. “To our surprise and delight 500 women came. The organization started to grow bigger after our first conference,” she said.

### Bumps

Yes, it may seem like Myren has it together but the journey towards it is ‘no piece of cake’. “It is difficult to gather women and find a common time since we have different schedules. Regular attendance for members to attend activities had always been difficult,” Myren admitted.

But one of Myren’s and most women’s admired qualities is persistence. Despite the challenges of schedules, she never gives up in finding the right time and moment for the members. She was the type to remind everyone of the organization’s activities and schedules. She was a very hands-on president that’s why many of her members despite their busy schedule would always find time for NEW. The organization itself is good, but without Myren, it wouldn’t be inspiring.

Finding new members is also a challenge since NEW would always have to defend its credibility as

an organization. “It was hard to establish the credibility of N.E.W. since it was an unknown group and I only had a simple background. One needs to be humble and persevere in any endeavor you take,” said Myren. She admits that her humble background as a leader is not enough to boost NEW’s integrity and authority but thanks to a pool of aspiring women who had been loyal to the group, she is able to uplift NEW in the industry.

Despite these bumps Myren is more than convinced to pursue the expansion and growth of NEW in the future. “It is fulfilling to see your members grow in their business through the help of NEW,” said Myren. “I hope that the organization and its members will

be able to establish links with the international business community and earn global recognition.”

### More than business as usual

What makes women entrepreneurs special is that they go beyond their means and needs to fulfill a goal greater than them. They always have emotions braided along with their dreams. It is never self-centered, it is always something for the better of all. Thus is what NEW reflects intensely.

“Business is not all about profit,” Myren shared. “To be considered successful, you should be able to help other people too.”

That’s why Myren never stops holding monthly forums and seminars for NEW members. “I had never been complacent with what I know. I still seek help and advice from more experienced entrepreneurs and mentors.”

And more than learning, these activities of NEW doesn’t only intend to keep everyone informed. “You need to have regular activities so that there is follow through and establish friendships among ourselves as well.”

At the end of the day, NEW is not just for business, it is for camaraderie and friendships. Since emotions are a big part of women, it is with emotions that they also create a better chunk of the world to other enterprising women.

Source: Manila Bulletin, July 3, 2016

■

# Woman entrepreneur rises above obstacles, inspires Taiwan youth

By Dimitri Bruyas, Supplement Writer

We all agree on the importance of entrepreneurship as a leading source of innovation, job creation and global economic growth. By challenging orthodox methods and creating new markets, creative entrepreneurs are positively disrupting the way we do business and enhancing our quality of life, while inspiring younger generations through a message of hope.

This is the message of Judy Lee, chairwoman of the Test Rite Group, who is representing Taiwan at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year awards in Monte Carlo in June 2016 to inspire Taiwan youth, and beyond.

## A Determination to Rise above Obstacles

Her story demonstrates the determination of a young woman to rise above obstacles. Lee launched a small company, Test Rite, with only five employees in the late 1970s and turned it into a listed company with more than 6,000 employees and annual revenue of US\$1 billion, with sixteen offices in twelve countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia four decades later.

“Only when you refuse to give up on your decision and when you bravely confront the world can you show a different developmental value,” she said.

Over the past forty years, she has weathered challenges, such as the New Taiwan dollar’s appreciation, cross-strait political crisis, the dot-com bubble and the global financial crisis. While Taiwan’s five major trading companies transformed themselves to become sales agents in order to survive, Test Rite has remained committed to its role as a trading company.

“During the 1990s, the trading business was developing steadily; however, we had already sensed that the trading industry would be impacted in the future as China gradually implemented reform and opening-up policies,” she said about her decision to have her company listed on the Stock Exchange in 1993. “In addition to trading, we hoped to develop a new area of retail business for the group in markets where it would



*Judy Lee, chairwoman of the Test Rite Group, is representing Taiwan at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year awards in Monte Carlo in June 2016. She already received the Ernst & Young Entrepreneurs of the Year award for Taiwan in 2015. (Courtesy of Test Rite Group)*

not compete with retail clients from Europe and the U.S.”

The Test Rite Group and its British trading client Kingfisher then opened B&Q in Taiwan in 1996, and the group later independently opened HOLA in 1998. Starting from 2002, Test Rite gradually acquired brands including HOLA CASA and FREER. In 2004, HOLA stores were opened in the northern, eastern and southern parts of China. Currently, the company operates over 140 retail stores in Taiwan and China, which offer a variety of home and lifestyle-related products and services.

## ‘Simplicity, Steadiness, Stability’ at Heart of her Business Ethics

Lee rightly believes that everyone’s top priority is to “have a home.” Years of observation have shown that people with a home tend to be more stable; and for her, “simplicity, steadiness and stability” are the most important elements in running a business. “This is the reason why the Test Rite Group has

continuously developed its trading and retail businesses through steady operations and creativity throughout the years, and only focuses on the home-related industry,” she explained.

Now, the Test Rite Group has become a comprehensive business, which encompasses trading, retail, e-commerce, product design and development, as well as storefront development and management. Looking back on the various transformations that Test Rite had embarked on to get to where it is today, however, the business woman knows that team work is key to its success.

“You can’t go on the journey of life without hitting any bumps, so you have to be strong enough to deal with all your successes and failures, and give your employees faith,” she went on. “Only when you do that will the employees be convinced enough to work hard alongside you.”

Because she treats employees like family, wisely

*Continued on page 11*

## Woman entrepreneur rises

... Continued from page 10

and bravely leads them to break new grounds, and makes the success of the team her top priority, Test Rite has one of the highest percentages of senior employees in the industry, and more than 350 of its employees possess more than 15 years of service experience. Her management style also includes frequently sharing insights and experiences with her staff, as well as encouraging women to pursue career development opportunities.

She also believes in making greater contributions to society and hopes to encourage young people in Taiwan who, like her, were born into low income families, to

“envision an ambitious future, to explore the world and to pursue their dreams.” This has been her long-term vision and is one of the reasons why she received the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of The Year award in 2015 for Taiwan, and serves as her motivation to win this year’s EY World Entrepreneur of the Year award — one of the world’s most prestigious business awards for entrepreneurs, with programs in 145 cities in 60 countries — in Monte Carlo in June. She also wants to take advantage of this opportunity to increase Taiwan’s exposure on the international stage and inspire more women to shatter the glass ceiling.

Source: *China Post*, May 26, 2016

---

## Laotian women get a feel for female entrepreneurship in Aomori

By Yoichi Kosukegawa

A recent visit to Japan sparked an entrepreneurial spirit in Phonepaseth Luangsivongsa, a college senior from Laos, inspiring plans to sell local specialty goods in a “one village, one product” style.

She observed various local industries and staple goods in Hachinohe and its surrounding area in Aomori Prefecture while hearing from female entrepreneurs in the region during her one-week stay in Japan.

“I do want to start my own business,” said the 22-year-old student at Rattana Business Administration College in Vientiane. “After seeing various local specialty goods sold in Aomori, I really feel like I will be able to sell local goods in Laos.”

Luangsivongsa is among 30 participants from Laos in the Japanese government’s JENESYS 2016 exchange program that connects the people of Japan with those in the Asia-Pacific region.

The 30 participants were all women, entrepreneurs as well as workers and students interested in starting businesses.

During their stay in Japan from Oct. 25 to Nov. 1, they visited the Nanbu municipal office to learn about local industries and tourism and observed the town-run market and shipment facilities of the local agricultural cooperative.

They also learned about folk crafts locally made in Nanbu — hishisashi, diamond-shaped embroideries, and sakiiori, torn-and-woven textiles.



Laotian female entrepreneurs, workers and students pose for a photo in Tokyo on Oct. 31 after finishing their visit to the Hachinohe area in Aomori Prefecture to observe local industries. | KYODO

In the old days, cotton was so precious that cloth was never wasted, leading to the development of such techniques. Small leftover pieces were layered and quilted to make hishisashi, and ragged pieces of cloth were torn and rewoven to make sakiiori.

Soukchay Khamson, a 28-year-old woman running her own store selling woven silk products in Vientiane, said, “It was very good to learn about the folk crafts rooted deeply in the life of the region in Aomori.

“We have similar products,” she said. “In regional areas in Laos, women are becoming more involved in the workforce by running businesses selling woven products.”

Continued on page 12

## Laotian women

... Continued from page 11

The participants also attended a lecture by a female entrepreneur, had luncheon meetings with local businesspeople, and enjoyed a home stay for a few days to experience the life of a local, before returning to Tokyo to report their experience and lessons.

The Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE), which implemented the exchange program, selected the Hachinohe area as a main venue for the program partly because Hachinohe Gakuin University in the city has a business course and some female graduates from it have started businesses in the region. An opportunity to exchange with some of those female entrepreneurs was arranged for the participants from Laos.

“JICE hopes the participants compare the situation in Japan, which is now making efforts to support women’s activities, with the environments of their own workplaces and systems,” said JICE Youth Exchange Division’s Kenichi Yamana. “We hope this program will provide an opportunity to think about the importance of women’s point of view.”

The participants were invited to the exchange program at a time when Japan itself is struggling to promote women’s active participation in the workforce. Women are being encouraged to return to work as Japan’s labor force population declines amid a rapidly graying society.

As one of the pillars of Japan’s growth strategy, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has called for creating a

“society in which all women shine,” seeking to raise the ratio of women in leadership positions to at least 30 percent by 2020.

The participants in the program said the roles of women in the Laotian workforce have been steadily becoming more important, with the ratio of women at important posts at government agencies and other organizations rising while the number of female entrepreneurs is also increasing.

Souphaphone Souannavong, a 31-year-old woman who serves as a business incubator as well as an investment and digital technology consultant, said that through the participation in the program, she learned about the importance of the Japanese way of working out detailed business plans, including the setting of targets for each process to minimize risk.

She also said she was impressed by the use of modern technology in various fields, including agriculture and tourism, and the creative and unique product development in Japan.

Although women’s participation in the Laotian economy is gradually advancing, Souannavong said, “The current situation is insufficient.

“It is very important for women in business to broaden their horizons by experiencing various things and introducing different ways of thinking,” she said. “We also have to make our management more systematic with technology, departing from a family business mindset.”

Source: *Japan Times*, November 11, 2016 ■

---

## New Business Center Supports Women Entrepreneurs in Mongolia

By Diana Fernandez, Enkhjin Bayarkhuu, and Ashleigh Griffiths



*The Asia Foundation, with support from the Korean government (KOICA), and working alongside the Municipality of Ulaanbaatar, local NGOs, and government partners, recently opened a new women’s business center, above, in Mongolia’s capital, Ulaanbaatar.*

At first glance, Mongolia appears to be a shining star globally in the realm of women’s empowerment, and in many ways, it is. For example, according to the UN’s Gender Development Index (GDI), women in Mongolia have a longer life expectancy than men (70.2 compared to 63.1), and outnumber men in school attendance across all ages. Women can be seen in high numbers in various professional sectors including the medical field, as well as in management roles in the government. However, if you scratch beneath the surface, the inequality that exists becomes more evident.

Although women are present in the economic, political, and social landscapes of Mongolia on some levels, one look at high-level political representation shows that women are not in the driver’s seat of decision-making. On the economic front, while women’s economic participation is high, women workers are concentrated

*Continued on page 13*

## New Business Center

... Continued from page 12

in a narrow set of occupations including retail, catering, and teaching, rather than higher-paying sectors such as mining, transportation, and energy, where prospects for advancement are greater. Women also take on the most significant burden of household work and compromise a large segment of the informal economy.

Findings from The Asia Foundation's recent internal project analysis, which surveyed 150 new and current women entrepreneurs in addition to government officials, bankers, and NGO representatives, reiterated the variety of challenges women face in starting and growing their businesses. The survey identified limited access to capital and insufficient collateral as the biggest hurdle in obtaining a loan. Interaction with government is also a challenge with complicated bureaucracy, poor service, and lack of policy-level support mentioned as key challenges. Women also said that they lacked the networking opportunities enjoyed by their male peers and instead of accessing professional services tended to turn to family members for business guidance.

Not only do such restraints keep women from reaching their own potential, the country's economy—hit hard by the global commodities slump and now in a state of crisis—is being held back from reaching its potential, too. Bringing women into the formal sector is a critical part of diversifying its income portfolio to buffer the volatile commodities market, as they are well educated and play a significant role in the participation of socio-economic and political activities. By supporting business development and addressing key constraints facing women entrepreneurs, Mongolia has an opportunity to unlock women's active and full participation, build a more stable economy, and increase job creation.

The Asia Foundation, with support from the Korean government (KOICA), and working alongside the Municipality of Ulaanbaatar, local NGOs, and government partners, recently opened a new women's business center in the capital.

The center fills a critical demand from female entrepreneurs for specialized support services such as mentoring and training and is designed to fill a niche market by complementing a training schedule with low-cost consulting services and a co-working space that provides facilities such as computers, printers, high-speed Wi-Fi, sound absorbent meeting rooms, a kitchen, and a children's play area. During the training days at the center, we are helping to nurture our client's entrepreneurial mindset, by teaching them to think outside of the box and see problems as opportunities.

In the first two months of operation, a total of 721 services were provided. One client who owns a



*Women entrepreneurs receive training at the new Women's Business Center. In the first two months of operation, a total of 721 services were provided.*

small business that sells baked goods said the center was “inclusive, modern, and essential” while another expressed that before coming to the center, “I couldn't outgrow my problems but the training has given me new ideas and helped me to work more productively. Now my business is improving.” Another client who runs a company specializing in handicrafts explained that before attending the center, she designed her products without listening to her customers. After participating in a training day at the center, she understood that the customer's needs are crucial to improve product design. During the training, she said she met many new women entrepreneurs and gained three more business partners.

As Mongolia develops, many gender disparities remain. The continuation of corrective programs that empower women will yield considerable development payoffs and improve development outcomes for the next generation. The center provides a critical first step—the next step is for the city of Ulaanbaatar to take the concept forward and use the model to provide services for women outside of the capital city. By advocating for the city to focus more on women's economic participation in the economy, the project helps to set a direct path toward inclusive economic growth, poverty eradication, and gender equality in Mongolia.

### **About the Authors:**

Diana Fernandez is The Asia Foundation's deputy country representative in Mongolia, Enkhjin Bayarkhuu is a project manager, and Ashleigh Griffiths is a project officer there. The views and opinions expressed here are those of the individual authors and not those of The Asia Foundation or its funders.

*Source: Asia Foundation, September 21, 2016* ■

# Facebook launches program to cultivate women entrepreneurs

By Coral H. Wang and Jill Huang, Special to The China Post

Social media giant Facebook has announced it will launch “SheMeansBusiness” in Taiwan — a series of workshops, resource centers and networking events to help female entrepreneurs in Taiwan enhance their skills, knowledge and connections.

Facebook held a forum at Taipei’s Syntrend Creative Park on July 21, 2016, inviting successful woman entrepreneurs to share their business experiences and take part in talks centered on the mission of the social networking website’s new project: “When women succeed, we all win.”

Facebook’s head of small business in Greater China, Amanda Chen, highlighted the difficulties woman face in starting a business.

“Only 36 percent of all entrepreneurs are women, and 19 percent of founders of startup companies are women, said Chen. “Though the numbers have been gradually increasing, there is still room for improvement.”

Taiwan’s National Development Council (NDC) Deputy Minister Kao Shien-quey told reporters that female entrepreneurs suffer from a lack of confidence and unfair treatment.

Kao said trends show certain characteristics women hold, such as sensitivity and patience, will become great advantages in the future, and the government should take more action to encourage woman entrepreneurs.

Clair Deevy, Facebook’s head of economic growth initiatives for Asia Pacific, said when women succeed at starting their businesses, they generate an immeasurable positive impact.

“SheMeansBusiness not only connects these entrepreneurs together, but it also seeks to raise awareness of the important role women play in economic and societal development,” said Deevy.



Facebook executive Amanda Chen, third from left, National Development Council (NDC) Deputy Minister Kao Shien-quey, third from right, and other speakers pose for a photo after a forum on women entrepreneurship in Taipei on Thursday, July 21, 2016. (Photo Courtesy of Coral H. Wang)



Source: China Post, July 23, 2016



# How Can More Women in Asia Break into Business?

*Business is still a man's domain. Gender bias keeps women out of good jobs and from seizing economic opportunities. They are also expected to maintain their traditional role as family caregivers. In Asia, less than half of working-age women are in the workforce, compared with 80% of men.*

We asked three women business leaders in Asia: what is the one thing that needs to change to enable more women, particularly from low-income backgrounds, to become successful entrepreneurs?

## Change mindsets

“We have to change how society thinks about women and how women think about themselves,” says Roshaneh Zafar, who was the first in Pakistan to offer a microfinance product designed for women entrepreneurs. After training under microfinance pioneer Muhammad Yunus at Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, Zafar went back to Pakistan to set up her own business, the Kashf Microfinance Bank Limited.

When she was just starting out, Zafar had a different perception of working women in her country. “I thought women worked out of their homes. They are not in the marketplace. But when we went out to the local marketplace, the first traders we met were women,” she said.

“Women have property rights in Pakistan, but in reality they really do not have property,” Zafar remarked. “If they don't have property, women in small and medium-sized enterprises cannot get a loan. It is also difficult to register a business without the consent of the husband. If you go to a bank they will ask you if have your husband's consent. But there is nothing in the law that requires this.”

“Women need to take charge and be ready to change,” Zafar said. They have to overcome discrimination as well as their lack of self-confidence.

## Show what women can do

“Women can do anything. We have to show the world what women can do - enable them to use their gifts,” said Pacita Juan, who started Figaro Coffee Co. and ECHOstore Sustainable Lifestyle in the Philippines.

Juan currently chairs the Women's Business Council of the Philippines and the ASEAN Women's Entrepreneur Network. One of her projects is the GREAT Women in ASEAN Initiative, which promotes and supports the



*Women leaders Thet Thet Khine, Pacita Juan, and Roshaneh Zafar talk about how to empower women in business.*

economic empowerment of women, particularly those in microenterprises.

To change mindsets, Juan said, “We need to have champions. We need inspiring stories of successful women who started from the grassroots.” She said ECHOstore showcases the products of women in microenterprises, and shares their stories through mass media. “We also need gender sensitivity training both for men and women,” Juan added. “There are women who put other women down.”

## Improve the work environment

Women should be able to work and at the same time take care of their families, said Thet Thet Khine, a member of parliament in Myanmar's House of Representatives. “Women can own property in Myanmar. They can own a business. What they need is a family-friendly work environment,” Khine said. “We need to enhance support for the family.”

Before entering politics, Khine was named one of the most successful businesswomen in Myanmar. She is managing director of Jewel Collection Manufacturing Co. Ltd. and vice-president of the Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs Association. “More than half of the population of Myanmar are women,” Khine said. “Empowering women can drive economic development.”

Economically empowering women also means giving them greater access to and control over high-value, productive resources, such as training, credit, technology, and markets. “Women need access to finance, and then access to markets,” said Juan. “But the mindset needs to change first before they can have the confidence to ask for money for business.”

*Source: Asian Development Bank, November 11, 2016 ■*



## Forum on Taiwan-proposed APEC women innovators project concludes



*Vice President Chen Chien-jen (right) meets with Melanne Verveer (left), former U.S. ambassador-at-large for global women issues, September 8 in Taipei. (Central News Agency)*

The Executive Yuan of Taiwan wrapped up a two-day forum on the Innovation for Women and Economic Development project September 8, 2016, marking the conclusion of the three-year Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation-funded endeavor.

The meeting was presided over by Minister without Portfolio Lin Mei-chu, and included keynote speakers Melanne Verveer, former U.S. ambassador-at-large for global women's issues, Nora K. Terrado, chairwoman of the 2015 APEC Women and the Economy Forum in the Philippines, and Jaclyn Tsai of law firm Lee, Tsai and Partners.

Twenty high-ranking policy officials from 10 countries such as Australia, Canada, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Thailand and Vietnam also attended the event to share their experiences and exchange views on issues relating to women's involvement in economic innovation.

In June, Lin led a 15-member delegation to attend the 2016 APEC Women and the Economy Forum in Lima, Peru, where she presented Taiwan's promotion of women's economic achievements in the Asia-Pacific region. At the meeting, she held talks with officials from nations such as the Philippines, Peru and Papua New Guinea and discussed the business experiences of women around the world.

Taiwan proposed the Innovation for Women and Economic Development project in 2013 to promote awareness of the role of women in the information and



### Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation



communications technology industry, determine the common obstacles that women face in the business world and how to overcome them, and provide a platform for discussion on a range of topics.

Over the course of the project, several innovations were achieved, such as a guidebook developed by the Executive Yuan's Department of Gender Equality to help women apply their ICT knowledge in the professional world, and an interactive computer program, WE boss, designed to encourage female entrepreneurship. The results of the project were discussed over the course of the forum, and will be used as references in APEC economies to promote women's economic policies.

While in Taiwan, Verveer also met with Vice President Chen Chien-jen and visited the Legislative Yuan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gender Equality Committee of the Executive Yuan and Taiwan Foundation for Democracy to exchange views on empowering women and promoting gender equality. The former ambassador, who was nominated for the position by U.S. President Barack Obama and approved by the Senate in 2009, served in that role until 2013.

*Source: Taiwan Today, September 8, 2016* ■

*Published by the Secretariat, Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry  
Victor C. Y. Tseng, Director General; Amador R. Honrado, Jr. – Editor*

*Wendy Yang / Jacqueline Uy – Contributing Editors; Julia Hsu – Assistant Editor*

*7/F-2, No. 760, Sec. 4, Bade Road, Taipei 10567, Taiwan; Tel: (886 2) 2760-1139; Fax: (886 2) 2760-7569*

*Email: cacci@cacci.biz / cacci@cacci.org.tw; Website: www.cacci.biz*