Women and Digitalization in Cambodia
Challenges and Opportunities

Ratana PHURIK-CALLEBAUT, Private Sector Development Specialist
Cambodia leapfrogged regarding mobile and smartphone penetration.

Facebook = internet

E-commerce user penetration: 32% only
62% of SMEs in Cambodia are owned by Women. Technology and digitalization bring opportunities.

A vibrant tech startup scene

A supportive ecosystem: Digital Cambodia Program

Women in tech profile: Young, Educated, Urban
But the strong gender digital divide is an issue

Source: UNESCAP Presentation

There is a gap between women’s and men’s meaningful access to ICT.

- **24%** Internet user gender gap in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **17%** Internet user gender gap worldwide.

People tend to be offline if they are:
- less educated,
- poorer,
- or live in rural areas,
  which are disproportionately women and girls.

Leading to loss opportunities, severe impact of COVID on women entrepreneurs and less effective policies.
A multi-faceted approach is needed to tackle this digital divide

Linked to the Lack of technological and social access, lack of participation in the process, inadequate contents and lack of ownership.

Despite...

A comprehensive gender strategic plan.
Neary Rattanak V

Major Government’s SME reforms: Khmer Enterprise, SME Bank, Single portal registration, Innovation Center, E-commerce law

Some great donor programs: UNESCAP “Catalyzing WE”, USAID Technovation, Go4eCam from UNDP/MOC
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<th>POLICY LEVEL</th>
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<td>• Strengthen implementation of a gender mainstreaming policy</td>
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<td>• Simplify admin procedures especially to register but also to close a company</td>
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<td>• Have dedicated admin focal points for SMEs</td>
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<td>• More innovative ways to access info</td>
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<th>ECOSYSTEM LEVEL</th>
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<td>• Improve the interconnectivity between stakeholders (government, donors and private sectors)</td>
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<td>• This will increase the impact and the collective learning</td>
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<th>PROGRAMS LEVEL</th>
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<td>• A more differentiated approach is needed</td>
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<td>• Difficult to scale good capacity building programs</td>
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<td>• Interesting trends: feminine role models, Young Women Entrepreneurs, community-based approach, peer mentoring</td>
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Key points

Digitalization offers interesting opportunities for Women MSMEs but no equal opportunities with a significant gender digital divide.

Effective Implementation is the key

Back to basics! Formalization remains the main. Need to simplify and build trust in the system

Technology can help but the human factor is still essential.
Thank you for your attention!

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