

## **Women Entrepreneurship and ICT(GKP-IKED Session)**

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- There are various opportunities for SMEs, thanks to the declining cost for transport and communications.
- Women entrepreneurship is highly informal and often rises from necessity-based reasons.
- Barriers for women still exist in business.
- In a male-dominated culture, it is difficult for women to get into closed “established” networks. This often becomes information barriers to women entrepreneurs.
- Women entrepreneurs can utilize Information and communication technologies(ICT) as and networking to launch a business.

Ingrid Andersson, CEO of ICSkane

- Why is networking so important for women in entrepreneurship?
  - So many businesses are done through networks, so it is critical for women entrepreneurs to go into networks.
  - Network is also about partnership.
- Well-functioning networks VS bad-functioning networks
  - Well-functioning networks should attract people from diverse backgrounds. They will also be able to bring new people into the network. Consequently, a network will become dynamic and viable.
  - A bad-functioning network is stagnated and usually the objective of the network is not clear.
- How to create good networks
  - Entrepreneur networks often can be homogeneous concerning gender, nationality and etc. It is important for people to have common ground.
  - Connecting families and friends is the start of networking. Furthermore, new networks can be created via the Internet.

- Utilize information and communications technology to build networks.

### **Women Entrepreneurship Challenges and Action Programs**

Janette Toral, CEO, DigitalFilipino

- DigitalFilipino successfully positioned itself as an e-business venture.
- It was launched as a book project in mid-1999.
- The company had two important visions. DigitalFilipino wanted to share e-commerce knowledge and skills with the world and establish strategic linkages and partnership worldwide.
  
- Opportunities and Challenges
- DigitalFilipino became a trusted research organization and also provides training and a consulting service.
- DigitalFilipino is a place for social networking and aims to expand into the global market.
- DigitalFilipino faced challenges concerning online payment and logistics. Moreover, the market was not ready to purchase research reports culturally.
- It is difficult to expand from a local market to a global market. So if you want to go global, you have to prepare for it from the beginning.
  
- To increase the number of women entrepreneurs, women, who received training, should share their knowledge and mentor others.

### **Free and Young: Program for Women Entrepreneurship**

James Yang, National Youth Commission Taiwan

- Women entrepreneurs make new models of business. They also have a potential to become a key player in a knowledge-based economy.
- The Taiwanese government launched a special program to empower women entrepreneurs.
- Although Taiwanese woman have always been active in business, their roles have not received due recognition.

- Key success factors of this program
- The level of the program improved gradually: It started with simple courses. When they were successful, new programs were added.
- The program had differentiated targets: beginners, start-ups, business owners and women's organizations.
- Networking is critical for the success of women entrepreneurs
- The role of women entrepreneur is a consultant, a coach, a cheerleader, an agent and a matchmaker.

Laina Raveendran

- Information and communication technologies will enable women entrepreneurs to break the previous barriers in business.
- Mentoring is a key factor for females to enter business.
- Governments should support female entrepreneurs by providing financing and a female friendly business environment.
- It is critical to have a finance plan before launching a business. For women entrepreneurs in particular financing often becomes a critical issue.