



WOMEN'S BUSINESS COUNCIL

P H I L I P P I N E S

Established in 1997

2016-2017 REPORT

Celebrating 20 years of Women Economic Empowerment

www.womenbiz.ph

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About WomenBizPH

Established in 1997, the Women's Business Council of the Philippines (WBCP) was borne out of the endorsement of the then President Fidel V. Ramos and Trade Secretary Ernesto V. Ordóñez as an advocacy group composed of the country's top women business leaders and entrepreneurs. As a platform to discuss women's issues in business and possible government policies and solutions, the organization during its infancy stage has already been recognized by the Department of Trade and Industry as the voice of women in commerce. With this, these group of powerful women created the collateral free lending window for women with private and government lending institutions and also prompted the inclusion of the contribution of women in business to the Philippine economy in the Philippine Census and Statistics.

Within a few years, the WBCP expanded its reach and network to create the first ever APEC study on how Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand dealt with the Asian crisis and also host the first APEC Conference of Women in Business in Dusit Thani with over 500 delegates in attendance. Likewise, it gave birth to the Confederation of Women's Business Councils (CWBC) and Confederation of Women in Science and Technology in order to affect and empower more women in the workforce.

Furthermore, the Women's Business Council of the Philippines was also able to represent and advocate the plight of women in business in environment conservation efforts among others things before a high level United Nations Environmental Program.

Recognizing that the women-related issues at hand is not the responsibility of women alone, the WBCP has long entered into partnerships and sponsorships with male-dominant groups, government agencies and international organizations such as the UNDP.



Launch of the WBCP in Malacanan with Polevaulting President H.E. Fidel Ramos, DTI Sec Cesar Bautista, WBCP Founding Chair Aida Gordon, WBCP Founding Pres Isabelita Palanca, and, women leaders from different industry sectors.



Launch of the Pinay Lending Window in Malacanan with Exec Sec Ronald Zamora, Honorary Woman DTI Usec Ernie Ordóñez, heads of government lending and private banking institutions.



Then Philippine Ambassador to Australia Delia Albert pose with delegates to the WBCP-hosted Asia-Pacific Businesswomen's Convention. In Dusit Thani, Makati



Then DTI Undersecretary for Investment, Melito Salazar, Jr., and other delegates to the UNEP High-Level Meet on Environmental Protection, after the keynote address of WBCP President Isabelita Palanca in Prague.



Officers of the Asia Pacific Women in Business (Taipei Lin Li Lee, Thailand Yowwares Shinawatra, Philippines Aida Gordon and Isabelita Palanca), as well as, Philippine Commission on Women Chair Amelou Benitez Reyes and Deputy Exec Director Annie Serrano pose with UNDP Officers Lorraine Corner during a UNDP workshop in Bangkok

OUR VISION

WE ARE THE WOMEN BUSINESS COUNCIL PHILIPPINES INC.

- We aspire to be role models for women in business;
- Be change agents that will forge political and business influences;
- Be credible advocates for women's issues and needs in business;
- Inspiring and empowering filipino women in the economy.

OUR MISSION

- To promote ethical business practices, particularly integrity and good governance;
- To instill passion and love for country and for business;
- To leverage our individual skills and strengths to influence government policies and the future of women in the economy.

OBJECTIVES

To create awareness of the Women's Business Council Philippines as the leading women's advocate and organization fo women among business and government communities via:

- To promote gender balance and diversity in business and in government;
- To conduct research and maintain a robust database on women in business;
- To uplift the knowledge and education of women in business in the philippines.

Endorsement of DTI Secretary Ramon M. Lopez last August 9, 2016



L-R: Atty. Lorna Kapunan, Ma. Aurora Geotina-Garcia, Pacita Juan, Carolina Escareal-Go, Undersecretary Nora Terrado, Secretary Ramon Lopez, Mylene Abiva, Atty. Benedicta Du-Baladad, Monette Hamlin, Kathleen Liechtenstein, Yolanda Sevilla



Message from the Secretary of Department of Trade and Industry



Ramon M. Lopez
Secretary



MESSAGE

I would like to congratulate the Women's Business Council of the Philippines (WBCP) as they celebrate their 20th anniversary. WomenBizPH, as they are better known, serves as an important platform for voicing women's issues in business and promoting women-led enterprises. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is proud to be part of the organization's story since WomenBizPH was established in 1997 through the endorsement of then-President Fidel Ramos.

According to the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE) 2017, the Philippines is 8th among 54 countries in female representation of business owners in the economy. This shows that the Filipina entrepreneur has achieved a great deal as of the present, and we believe that WomenBizPH has played a major part in this endeavor.

DTI shares WomenBizPH's goal of empowering women entrepreneurs, given that women have always been at the forefront of the creation and management of businesses in the Philippines. When we provide business opportunities to women, especially mothers, we uplift not just individuals, but also their families.

That is why DTI's efforts on developing Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have also focused on the youth and women. In this regard, DTI's 7Ms of Entrepreneurship initiative (Mindset Change, Mastery, Mentoring, Money, Machine, Market Access, and Models of Negosyo) will boost the Entrepreneurial Revolution in the country, while also helping aspiring women entrepreneurs.

Moreover, when the Philippines hosted the ASEAN regional meet last year, we were successful in submitting the Action Agenda on Mainstreaming Women Economic Empowerment to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). This would support the Philippine's push for the women agenda in the business and economic landscape in ASEAN.

But we know that there is still more we can do. This means ensuring more women entrepreneurs have access to resources, training, and financing to help them achieve their entrepreneurial goals. Through DTI's efforts to support MSMEs and aspiring women entrepreneurs, I am confident that more women will start to create and lead their own businesses. And in collaboration with WBCP, I am certain that these women-entrepreneurs will go on to make an impact in their fields and, in turn, the country—for greater inclusive growth and shared prosperity for all.

Thank you and *mabuhay ang babaeng negosyante!*


RAMON M. LOPEZ
Secretary

Enabling Business, Empowering Consumers

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Message from the Executive Director of the Philippine Commission on Women



Emmeline L. Verzosa, CEO III
Executive Director

The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) is proud to be an ally of the Women's Business Council of the Philippines or WomenBizPH. Through the years, we have maintained an interface with WomenBizPH as our private sector partner to effect changes in policies for women's economic empowerment, including better access to resources and markets and collection of sex-disaggregated data for better programs and services.

In 2015 and 2017, we worked closely with WomenBizPH for the APEC Women and the Economy Forum and the ASEAN Women's Business Conference, respectively. In both instances, WomenBizPH mobilized the private sector for a dialogue with other economies and member states and other women in business. WomenBizPH highlighted the importance of investing in women and providing better access to technology and its applications, improved product design, and wider markets. The PCW has also regularly endorsed WomenBizPH's conduct of lunch fora, where its members as well as the public are updated with issues, share knowledge, and grow their networks.

Female solidarity and leadership have always been at the core of what WomenBizPH stands for. The sisterhood brings out a kind of confidence that unleashes women's inherent passion, dedication, innovation and creativity to address challenges in enterprise development.

As WomenBizPH enters its 21st year, the PCW remains committed to stand by you in igniting women's potential as agents and recipients of inclusive economic development. May the start of this new decade usher in a new wave of young women business leaders, stronger ties within and outside the organization, and sustained courage to overcome barriers that women entrepreneurs and women-led businesses encounter.

We look forward to more venues for collaboration with WomenBizPH and its allies in achieving gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

Congratulations on your entry to "adulthood"!

Thank you very much.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emmeline Verzosa". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

EMMELINE L. VERZOSA, CEO III
Executive Director III

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



As another term comes to an end, a pause for reflection often comes naturally to us, usually asking the questions dearest to our causes. For Women's Business Council Philippines (WomenBizPh), how has 2016-2018 been for Filipino women especially in a drastically different and challenging political and social climate? With the recent ASEAN Women's Business Conference, it is both a cause for celebration and resolve to be more than business as usual in creating a nurturing and collaborative community of women and men committed to gender diversity. Additionally, research we have done on Inclusive Business in the APEC economies has shown that while women are indeed prime movers, there is a need to continue building the enabling environment central to entrepreneurship and the economy for women. We have more work to do, and it is this exciting and fulfilling endeavor that propels us to break more barriers and to find pioneering creative solutions.

We are grateful to all our members, partners and friends in business and in government, in the ASEAN region and in the APEC economies, who believe and continue to believe in the importance of what we do. The journey and the challenges are always made easier when different stakeholders not only work together but truly understand why we are doing what we are doing. For us in WomenBizPh, it is important that women are able to define their own landscapes and boundaries, support and stand up for each other and set the stage for a more inclusive business environment, with gender diversity, equality and empowerment that will allow the next generations to prosper and be better.

We look forward to your continued support as we endeavor to put together more events, programs, policy advocacy, and research in women economic empowerment in the coming years.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chiqui Escareal-Go'.

Chiqui Escareal-Go
President 2016-2018

2016 – 2017 ACTIVITIES

WOMENBIZPH TALKS / 2016

Women Vote II – Raising Women's Issues

March 17, 2016

Venue: Pavilion Tent, Dusit Thani Hotel Manila, Makati City

A non-partisan, voter's education and discussion among Filipino Male Candidates on their Platforms for Women

Venue: Pavilion Tent of the Dusit Thani Hotel Manila, Makati City



Moderator/Emcee: Ces Drilon



Senatorial Candidate: Richard "Dick" Gordon



Senatorial candidate: Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan



L-R: Amb. Delia Albert, Ma. Aurora Geotina-Garcia, Pacita Juan, Ces Drilon, Sen. Rafael Alunan, Joel Villanueva, Ramon Romulo, Carolina Escareal-Go, Camille Escudero, Jeannie Javelosa

2016 – 2017 ACTIVITIES

Understanding Wholeness: Your Yin and Yang Dynamics

August 9, 2016

Venue: Sarika Function Room, Dusit Thani Hotel Manila, Makati City



Guest speaker and WomenBizPH member: Jeannie Javelosa

W2W Forum: Disruptive Moves, Lifestyles and Transformations in the 21st Century

October 21, 2016

Venue: Mayuree 1 Ballroom, Dusit Thani Hotel Manila, Makati City



Khun Suphaje Suthumpun, Group Chief Executive Officer, Dusit International



L-R: Chiqui Escareal-Go, Evelyn Singson, Boots Garcia, Samantha Pimentel, Rep. Geraldine Roman, Chit Juan, Atty. Lorna kapunan, Coco Alcuaz

2016 – 2017 ACTIVITIES

Shattering the Expatriate Glass Ceiling

January 27, 2017

Venue: Kamagong Meeting Room, Dusit Thani Hotel Manila, Makati City



Making the Case for Gender Diversity in Corporate Boards

July 5, 2017

Venue: Yakal Meeting Room, Dusit Thani Hotel Manila, Makati City



PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC NETWORK (PHILWEN)



(Seated L-R) Jeannie Javelosa, Cristina Concepcion, Myren Garcia, Ma. Aurora Geotina-Garcia, Vicky Garchitorea, Chit Juan (Standing L-R) Bea Lim, Racquel Cagurangan, Farah Ancieto, Evelyn Singson, Chiqui Escareal-Go, Atty. Dick Du-Baladad, Mylene Abiva, Jenny-Lind Elmaco and Sharon Dayoan

A network of women in business was formed an umbrella group to better push for policy advocacy and joint programs in preparation for the ASEAN meeting next year which is hosted by the Philippines. Called Philippine Women's Economic Network or (PhilWEN), it is inspired by successful coalitions of women groups espousing the same or similar advocacy for women economic empowerment. The group will be permanently chaired by WomenBlzPH a pioneer women's advocacy group formed by the Department of Trade and Industry almost 20 years ago in 1997.

About Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (PBCWE)

The Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (PBCWE) was launched in March 2017 through the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded Investing in Women (IW) program. In the Philippines, IW has partnered with the Philippine Women's Economic Network (PhilWEN) to create a business coalition to pursue Gender Equality (GE) in the workplace and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) nationwide.



The Executive Team (from L-R) Program Coordinator, Ana Bobadilla; Communications Manager, Jennifer Lazo; Program Officer, Jose Orozco; Executive Director, Julia Abad; Human Resource Manager, Alberto Perez, Jr.; Program Manager, Amor Curaming and Finance and Admin Manager, Pamela de Veyra.



ASEAN WOMEN'S BUSINESS CONFERENCE 2017



The 2017 ASEAN Women's Business Conference (AWBC) is a one-day platform that puts forward the women agenda in the business and economic landscape through strategic dialogues with various stakeholders within the ASEAN region. The Conference gathered a total of 638 individuals comprised of ASEAN women business leaders and entrepreneurs, including ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network (AWEN) Country Focal Points; government officials; private sector executives; and representatives from ASEAN dialogue partners and multilateral/ international organizations.

Specifically, the conference aims to address the issues and concerns on women's entrepreneurship focused on the following areas:

- Market access and finance
- Identification of innovative business models
- Exploring new ways of thinking that supports women
- Determination of baseline data that would help provide an overview on the status of women in economic activities

The inputs gathered from the dialogues during the Conference will help craft suitable policies, programs, and activities for women entrepreneurs in the ASEAN region.

A total of 638 women and men from various sectors of ASEAN-member nations attended the 2017 ASEAN Women's Business Conference. Of these, 467 were pre-registered delegates while 171 were on-site registered participants.

THE AWBC CONVENORS

The AWBC is organized by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network (AWEN), and the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW).

1. **Department of Trade and Industry** – DTI is the government's executive arm responsible for realizing the country's goal of globally competitive and innovative industry and services sector that contribute to inclusive growth and employment generation. Its mission is to be the government's main economic catalyst in empowering consumers and in enabling innovative, competitive, job-generating, and inclusive business.

2. **ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network** – AWEN is a network of business women in the region, operating to develop and propose initiatives that will promote economic and trade activities to enhance gender equality, empower women entrepreneurs, and create a favorable environment for female-led enterprises. It was established in 2012 when the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) adopted AWEN's Terms of Reference during the ACW Meeting in Vientiane, Laos.
3. **Philippine Commission on Women** – PCW is the government's primary policy-making and coordinating body on women and gender equality concerns.

The ASEAN Women Entrepreneur of the Year



70 awardees coming from all ASEAN members: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines.

The ASEAN Women Entrepreneur of the Year celebrates the accomplishments of extraordinary women from micro, small, medium and large enterprises from each ASEAN Member State, who through their commitment, vision, and leadership, have made remarkable impact in their field and in society.

These outstanding women are living examples of how innovative businesses, no matter how big or small, can make a significant difference and contribution to society and the economy as a whole. These women may also come from social enterprises and companies that are gender-sensitive and promote fair labor practices for women.

The said Awards was organized by the Women's Business Council Philippines, Inc. (WomenBizPH), The ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs' Network (AWEN), The Department of Trade & Industry of the Philippines (DTI), and the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW).

Objectives

- To give recognition to the outstanding women from micro, mall, medium and large enterprises (MSMEs) of ASEAN Member States and share their stories and best endeavors;
- To promote women as vital contributors in the domestic and global economic activities of ASEAN;
- To provide aspirational role models and inspiration to the delegates and participants in attendance to embody the ideals of AWEN; and
- To showcase how women are leading change to become prime movers and contributors to the attainment of inclusive growth in their economy.



L-R: Chiqui Escareal-Go, Zarah Juan (Green Life Ecobag, Inc.), Audrey Tanco Uy (Bizu Catering Studio/Serve Happy Jobs), Chit Juan, Princess Kumalah Elardo (People's Alliance for Progress Multipurpose Cooperative), Boots Garcia, Darlyn Sandra Ty-Nilo (Viviamo! Inc.), Jacqueline Gutierrez (Happy Skin Cosmetics)

Not in photo: Charita Puentespina (Puentespina Farms and Malagos Agri-ventures Corporation), Joji Ilagan Bian (Joji Ilagan International Schools and Joji Ilagan Career Center Foundation Inc.), Kathleen Paigo Yu (Rumarocket Ltd.), Mary Ann M. Montemayor (Villa Margarita Catering Services; Davao Ecocrafts Association), May Aileen Uy (May's Organic Garden)

The awardees will be organized into a group of AWEN Ambassadors whose task will be to (1) promote AWEN in their countries and across the region, (2) explore opportunities for AWEN women entrepreneurs, and (3) provide mentorship to women-led businesses. AWEN Thailand will be drafting the Terms of Reference for the AWEN Ambassadors.



The ASEAN Women Entrepreneur Award trophy was designed by renowned artist and WomenBizPH Member, Ann Pamintuan

RESEARCH INITIATED BY WOMENBIZPH

Financing Women Entrepreneurs

Date: 7 March 2017



Chit Juan and Jeannie Javelosa posing with women entrepreneurs from Myanmar promoting their coffee products.

The researchers sought to identify issues and challenges met by women-owned or driven micro, small and medium size enterprises (MSMEs), and formulate recommendations to address them. The researchers undertook to study the existing credit environment in which these MSMEs currently operate, the factors affecting the environment and the actors in it, and their impact on women entrepreneurs. The method of research included review of current literature, the conduct of an online survey and key informant interviews.

The researchers collected data and responses from two groups of women MSME entrepreneurs (MSMEEs): Group 1) Various MSME women network respondents, with some knowledge of the credit environment and opportunities, and Group 2) AHON SA HIRAP INC. (ASHI) respondents with little to no knowledge of the credit environment and opportunities. MSMEEs were also found in 4 settings: Urban and highly-urban, rural, far-flung/remote, and conflict areas.

The study identified two barriers to MSMEs' full development: 1) There is a lack of accessible, comprehensive information on entrepreneurship with practical features targeted toward serving women; and 2) a lack of access to productive resources for women-owned and/or driven MSMEs.

What is interesting to note is that both groups of MSMEEs met with the same issues and challenges, albeit at different stages of their development. For Group 1 MSMEEs, the challenges keep them from expansion or diversification. For Group 2 MSMEEs, the challenges stall them at the beginning of their entrepreneurial journey – depriving them of capital for start-up, and no opportunity for diversification.

The study recognized that private sector will not venture in “greenfield” areas which are not commercially viable despite existing penalties for not extending credit to MSMEs. As such, government led initiatives will need to be in place in these “greenfield” areas so that once MSMEs have grown into a viable size and have become credit worthy, the private sector will be willing to extend credit for expansion.

In response, the researchers recommend that the government first be lobbied to set the policy, framework and guidelines for the development of a roadmap for women entrepreneurs to direct and harmonize government and private sector initiatives, to include the following: 1) Incentive Program for women MSMEEs, 2) Information Campaign for women MSMEEs, and 3) Entrepreneurial concepts and skills to be included in K-12 education.

Through tax incentives either in the form of reduced customs duties and tax rates at both national and local levels, the private sector (Banks and NGOs) should be encouraged to support and augment government initiatives, to ensure that guidelines and standards are met, and no one is left behind.

To request for a copy of the study, please send an email to Ms. Russel Rivera at admin@womenbiz.ph

Research on Women as Prime Movers of Inclusive Business (APEC-funded with The Department of Trade and Industry)



Rationale

Women workers constitute 40 percent of the world's workforce, yet in many sectors, such as mining, construction and energy, women represent only a small minority of workers, and in almost all sectors women are less likely than men to be in management positions (IFC, 2013). For instance, women see gaps in leadership: as of 2014, only 4.8 percent of CEOs at Fortune 500 companies were female and only 16.9 percent of board seats at Fortune 500 companies were held by women (CEAIB, 2015). Women continue to face many barriers to full and productive participation in the labor market, including discrimination and culturally entrenched ideas about gender roles, and their contribution is not always equally valued. As such, women are an untapped source of talent and productivity: when the potential of almost half the workforce is not fully realized, this has considerable implications for efficiency and growth at the enterprise, sectoral, and national level (IFC, 2013). A recent United Nations report states that limits on women's participation in the workforce across the Asia-Pacific region cost the economy an estimated US \$89 billion every year (APEC, 2016).

APEC members recognize the full potential of women's contribution to the Asia-Pacific economy. As a result, women's economic empowerment and greater inclusion of women in the regional economy are high on APEC's agenda. Currently, in the 21 APEC economies, approximately 600 million women are in the labor force, with over 60 percent engaged in the formal sector (APEC, 2016).

Despite women's increased participation in the labour market over the past half-century, they remain substantially underrepresented as entrepreneurs (OECD, 2012). Thus, APEC came up with a project entitled "Women as Prime Movers of Inclusive Business", a cross-fora collaboration effort of PPWE (as the lead forum) and IEG, where it looks into the broader aspect of Inclusive Business (IB) both in theory and practice, and zooms into how women's economic empowerment serves as vital contribution in the development, scale-up, and replication of IB models in the Asia Pacific region. It aims to provide more understanding on the importance of IB in helping narrow the chasm between the rich and the poor, alongside addressing the gender gap. It aspires to provide a fresh perspective on how businesses that recognize gender-based constraints reap substantial benefits and trickle-down results up to those in the base of the pyramid (BoP). To do this, the project will conduct a survey to compile success stories and best endeavours of member economies' IBs that recognize the contribution of addressing barriers to women's economic empowerment in attaining balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative, and secure growth objectives (AIMP2.APEC, 2015), hence, this study.

Objective

This paper aimed to present the potential benefits, enabling conditions, and policy aspirations of women in Inclusive Business Models (IBM).

Specifically it sought to:

1. Present the emergent concept, background and impact Inclusive Business and on the local, regional and world economy;
2. Show the centrality of women as prime movers in the creation of Inclusive Businesses;
3. Describe the important role of government and other stakeholders in priming a favourable business environment for women in inclusive businesses; and
4. Conduct a survey research with relevant organizations in selected APEC-member economies to establish the business case for Women in Business.

Women Entrepreneurship Studies in the Philippines

(A study done with the De La Salle University - Center for Business Research and Development)

This inventory of literature on women entrepreneurs examined the different researches and publications done about Filipina entrepreneurs for the past 45 years. It can be seen that the 15-year period beginning in 1970 produced only three published researches, which includes one book done by the PBSP profiling women entrepreneurs, an article in a conference proceeding, and another report on the fertility behavior of Filipino women entrepreneurs, which related entrepreneurial competency to fertility and family planning. The subsequent years showed an increase in the number of researches on women entrepreneurs. Researches done in the early 90's were more focused on competency (e.g., personal attributes, skills), resiliency (e.g., overcoming challenges), empowerment (e.g., self-e cacy, influencing others), and support given to women entrepreneurs. During this period, more books were published and scholarly interest started with more theses/dissertations being done, journal articles increasing in number, and case studies profiling the role and traits of women entrepreneurs starting to come out. Subsequent studies were still focused on the same themes, but a significant number has now focused on the story of successful women entrepreneurs, how they started and overcame the barriers towards becoming successful entrepreneurs who are highly regarded in their community or in their specific industries. The review of related literature has shown that Filipina entrepreneurs are now more empowered, resilient, competent, and given more support by the government, which can lead to influence in shaping our society and the economy.

The objective of this report is to prepare a comprehensive inventory of studies on women entrepreneurship in the Philippines that policy makers, government agencies, non-government organizations, and other research institutions could tap as a source for their decision making and for the implementation of their activities.

APEC 2017

Women Entrepreneurs Forum: She Means Business
28 September 2017 in Hue City, Vietnam



WomenBizPH and AWEN Chairperson, Chit Juan and WomenBizPH Board Adviser and AWEN Co-Chair, Boots Garcia, shares a photo with VWEC Chair and AWEN Vietnam Focal Point, Madame Minh Thi Tuyet and Guest.

2017 APEC Women and the Economy Forum Statement

ENHANCING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE CHANGING WORLD

1. We APEC Ministers and Heads of Delegations met in Hue, Viet Nam from 26 to 29 September 2017 for the APEC Women and the Economy Forum (WEF) chaired by His Excellency Dao Ngoc Dungz, Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of Vietnam. We were joined by senior officials, ABAC, private sector leaders, and representatives from international and non-governmental organizations.
2. We share the view that the Asia Pacific is at a crucial juncture of transformation amidst a fast changing global landscape. The Digital Age is having unprecedented impact on the nature of work in general and women's economic inclusion and empowerment in particular. Inclusive and sustainable growth around the world is the overarching vision of the 2030 development agenda. Gender equality and women's economic inclusion and empowerment are central to this vision.
3. We acknowledge the first APEC High-Level Policy Dialogue on Women and the Economy held in San Francisco in 2011 as a significant landmark, paving the way for the annual High-Level Policy Dialogue and concrete actions to promote women and the economy as an integral part of the APEC agenda. We recognize the benefits that have arisen from closer collaboration between APEC and ABAC, policy makers and women-focused business associations and networks.
4. Under the APEC 2017 theme 'Creating New Dynamism, Fostering a Shared Future' we focus our deliberations on 'Enhancing Women's Economic Inclusion and Empowerment in the Changing World' with three priorities: i) Promoting gender equality for sustainable, innovative and inclusive economic growth; ii) Enhancing the competitiveness and innovation of women-owned MSMEs; and iii) Narrowing gender gaps in human resource development.
5. We applaud APEC Leaders' commitment to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment across APEC by pursuing concrete policies and innovative measures to further enhance women's access to capital and assets; access to markets; skills, capacity building, and health; women's leadership, voice and agency; innovation and technology. We commit to our collective actions following APEC Leaders' recognition of efforts to support women's empowerment and entrepreneurship across APEC: grow women-led micro and small and medium size enterprises (MSMEs); enhance women and girls' digital literacy; promote women's career development; increase and strengthen women's and girls' access to and participation in training and careers in higher-wage, high-growth fields such as science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM). We also commit to further encourage gender diversity at management levels, including senior leadership and governance structures.

6. We reaffirm our support for the development of concrete and actionable measures to advance women's economic, financial and social inclusion across APEC fora. We endorse PPWE's Gender Inclusion Guidelines as a significant tool to implement gender-responsive policies and programs across APEC. We instruct the PPWE to work with and across APEC fora to enhance the knowledge of policy makers, decision makers and implementers at all levels charged with formulating gender-responsive laws, policies, programs and APEC projects.
7. We welcome the diverse activities currently being led by the APEC Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE) to advance the economic inclusion of women (Annex A) and note the collaboration with other APEC fora in many of these important initiatives (Annex B). In addition, we note that the integration of gender into activities led by other APEC fora is gathering pace. We instruct PPWE to continue its focus of collaboration and support such activities, and to continue to engage across APEC fora to further strengthen this pipeline of initiatives.
8. We recognize the essential role and co-responsibility of men and boys in deepening the integration and economic empowerment of women in a changing world. We re-affirm that men and boys make a crucial contribution to gender equality and need to be engaged systematically as strategic partners and allies in achieving gender equality.
9. We reemphasize our call to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. We recognize that these forms of violence are significant impediments to the achievement of women's economic empowerment and inclusive growth. We reiterate our call to better understand its economic impact through investments in data collection and long-term research in order to develop holistic and effective approaches to prevent and respond to all forms of gender-based violence against women. We also encourage economies to consider increased gender-responsive expenditure and provision of services that help prevent violence against women in the home, the workplace and public spaces. Social protection services increase women's economic participation, positively affect human, social and economic development and deflect loss of income and decreased productivity to economies in general and families in particular.
10. We recognize the challenge climate change poses to the achievement of sustainable development and that women and girls are often disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change and other environmental issues. We encourage economies to respect, promote and consider gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls when taking action to address climate change.
11. We encourage economies to share research, raise the quality of sex-disaggregated data, indicators and best practices regarding women and the economy. We welcome the release of the 2017 version of the APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard and encourage economies to use the data outlined therein for evidence-based decision making.

Promoting gender equality for sustainable, innovative and inclusive economic growth

12. We acknowledge the relevant outcomes from the 2017 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the G20 and 61st United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). We recognize that governments, the private sector and civil society must work collaboratively to create an enabling environment for women's full, equal and effective participation in, and benefit from, the changing world of work. This includes strengthening women's and girl's access to quality education, training, and skills development environments; implementing, as appropriate, laws and policies to promote decent work, including establishing safe and healthy work places; prohibiting gender-based discrimination; requiring equal pay for equal work or work of equal value; promoting the transition from the informal to formal economy; addressing the mobility of women workers; bridging the digital divide; strengthening women's collective voice and economic leadership in policy decision making; and encouraging investments in policy research, better data collection and impact evaluation for gender equality.

13. We remain concerned that substantial disparities still exist in employment and income opportunities between women and men. Women carry out a disproportionate share of unpaid care, household and agricultural work, while experiencing disadvantages including limited access to assets, markets, networks, ICTs, financial and productive resources. We encourage member economies to:
- Recognize, reduce, and redistribute the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by enacting legislation and undertaking reforms that realize the equal rights of all women and men with a view to addressing the issue of women's disproportionate burden of care work.
 - We encourage economies to strengthen the ecosystem for women and girls regarding STEAM education and employment to bridge the digital divide; leverage women's and girls' talents; and take advantage of new opportunities presented by the Digital Age, including online learning and the removal of the digital gender divide in accessing ICT.
 - Enable full participation in business, entrepreneurship and global value chains; integrate women located in rural and remote areas, indigenous women and women's cooperatives by providing them with access to infrastructure, including public utilities, technology, transportation, water and sanitation.
 - Strengthen public-private cooperation to improve, as appropriate, policies and programs that support and facilitate the economic inclusion of those most disadvantaged and vulnerable to poverty, including women in rural and remote areas, indigenous women, ethnic women, women with disabilities, women heads of households, survivors of violence against women, survivors of natural disasters and armed conflict, migrant workers and other vulnerable groups. We encourage participation and cooperation among all stakeholders to collect and process sex-disaggregated labor market information.
 - Promote inclusive workplace, training and education environments that are responsive to the needs of women and girls.

Enhancing the competitiveness and innovation of women-owned MSMEs

14. We welcome APEC economies' implementation of the actions in the Boracay Action Agenda focusing on women-led MSMEs: 1) fostering the use of sex-disaggregated data in measuring the economic and social impacts on MSMEs; 2) promoting an understanding of the divergent constraints faced by men and women-led MSMEs; and 3) encouraging exchange of best practices on women-friendly cross-border procedures with customs and other border authorities. We welcome the Agenda's common goal towards 2020 to identify indicators to track individual members and regional progress on MSMEs.
15. We recognize women's immense contribution to the achievement of sustainable, innovative and inclusive growth in the region and acknowledge the remarkable contribution of MSMEs to the GDP of every APEC economy. Business associations are the backbone and voice of the business community, supporting the improvement of the skill base and enabling environment of their constituents. Those that work on behalf of women entrepreneurs are well placed to impart valuable business knowledge to policy makers and help develop inclusive business programs and indicators. We call on the private sector to champion the inclusive business agenda and include women in the development of inclusive business models, whether as workers, suppliers, distributors, customers or consumers. We encourage both the public and private sectors to collaborate on gender-responsive policies and practices, services, training and market information that improve access for women-led enterprises to resources and opportunities. We strongly encourage member economies to directly engage with business associations and other relevant organizations to help them develop business enabling environments that support women entrepreneurs and women-led cooperatives to start up and scale their operations, ensure their equal access to finance and markets; expand women-led MSMEs' global presence and their participation under equal conditions in global value chains; and empower women entrepreneurs through digitalization. We particularly encourage economies to promote and facilitate the association of women entrepreneurs and cooperatives in rural and highly vulnerable areas, share research, sex-disaggregated data, indicators and best practices in gender-inclusive development.

Narrowing gender gaps in human resource development

16. As the increasingly connected economic environment continues to frame our work, we recognize the shift towards an increase in demand for technology-enabled skills. We recognize that a number of APEC economies have succeeded in developing women's skills and competencies, boosting their domestic economic growth and integration into the regional economy, including through the use of ICTs.
17. We acknowledge the opportunities and challenges for women and girls, in particular vulnerable groups, of the 4th Industrial Revolution: the convergence of smart phones, cloud computing, the Internet of Things (IoT), sophisticated artificial intelligence, smart cities, and advanced robotic technologies into interoperable global value chains. We welcome the recently endorsed Framework for Human Resources Development in the Digital Age to address capacity-building priorities in this area and where appropriate:
 - We call for targeted technical training to improve women and girls' digital literacy to unlock job opportunities and entrepreneurship.
 - We encourage economies to strengthen the ecosystem for women and girls regarding STEAM education and employment to bridge the digital divide; leverage women's and girls' talents; and take advantage of new opportunities presented by the Digital Age, including online learning and the removal of the digital gender divide in accessing ICT.
18. We acknowledge that the information technology revolution has brought new forms of violence against women, including cyber-bullying, online harassment and cyber-stalking. Such violence has prevented women from participating in the economy as users, content creators, employees, entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders. We encourage economies to implement awareness raising programs, women-friendly web spaces, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, and accessible public reporting mechanisms that recognize that cyber-acts can be a form of violence against women and girls.
19. We welcome the outcomes and recommendations of the Public-Private Dialogue on Women and the Economy (PPDWE). We support the ongoing reflection on a post-2020 APEC vision and welcome the deliberations at the PPDWE on building a vision on women's economic empowerment for the Asia Pacific as part of our contribution to this process.

Towards APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting 2017 in Da Nang, Viet Nam

20. We seek APEC Leaders' consideration to include in their 2017 Declaration a statement on the importance of further advancing women's economic inclusion to tap into their full potential contribution to sustainable, innovative and inclusive growth. We agree to submit this 2017 APEC Women and the Economy Forum Statement to the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting to be held in November in Da Nang, Viet Nam.

APEC Women and the Economy Forum 2018

21. We look forward to our next APEC Women and the Economy Forum and relevant activities in Papua New Guinea in 2018.

APEC 2017 Women and the Economy Forum

Current PPWE PROJECTS

APEC BEST Award

Launched in 2016, the APEC Business Efficiency and Success Target Awards (APEC BEST Awards) was the first annual contest for women-entrepreneurs across the APEC region. The APEC BEST Awards seek to raise women's awareness on benefits of self-employment and help women-entrepreneurs to internationalize their businesses, attract international partners and potential investors from the APEC economies. The contest also contributes to building networks among women entrepreneurs, consultants, mentors and investors across the APEC region. Spreading best practices of women-owned SMEs among APEC economies provides an opportunity to involve a larger number of women into entrepreneurship, create new jobs in different industries, and support economic growth and development by applying promising business models based on domestic success stories. The second APEC BEST Awards contest was held on 27 September 2017 in the margins of Women and the Economy Forum in Hue, Viet Nam.



APEC Announces Asia-Pacific's Top Women Entrepreneurs.



Bernadette de los Santos of BidiBidi Café Ba-Ao, Camarines Sur, Philippines receives an award at the APEC Women and the Economy Forum.

Diversity Management for Women's Empowerment

Diversity Management for Women's Empowerment: In the APEC 2016 WEF Statement, all economies were encouraged to increase gender diversity on executive boards and in senior management of companies which positively affect corporate sustainability and growth. In order to deepen last year's achievement in WEF, this project aims to enhance women's empowerment through facilitation of mutual-understanding and awareness for diversity management by following two activities: to stock take actions relating to diversity management and women's empowerment, and to share them as good practices among APEC economies; to organize an APEC Top Management Forum on Diversity Management for Women's Empowerment in Tokyo for sharing good practices, discussing obstacles and identifying key challenges for facilitating diversity management and women's empowerment.

Promoting Women in Decision Making Positions in the Public and Private Sector

One of the planned activities is the conduct of a workshop to exchange ideas and promote best practices on implementation of suitable policies to increase women's representation in leadership roles across both public and private sectors. The report of the Workshop will serve as reference to economies to identify the best policies to promote women in decision making positions in the public and private sectors.

Sex-Disaggregated Data Collection

The Women and the Economy Dashboard is a set of 75 indicators on the status of women in APEC's member economies. The Dashboard is a tool to track, measure, and communicate progress in reducing barriers to women's economic participation across our five key pillars: (a) Access to capital and assets; (b) Access to markets; (c) Skills, capacity building, and health; (d) Leadership, voice, and agency; and (e) Innovation and technology. The APEC Policy Support Unit reported on the indicators under the Dashboard for the first time in September 2015, using highly credible international data sources such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Labor Organization, the World Economic Forum, and the World Health Organization. The Dashboard's indicators are assessed and reported on bi-annually.

Women's Economic Empowerment and ICT

The 'Women's Economic Empowerment and ICT' project will be implemented to update APEC women about the current trends and features of the 4th industrial revolution; to compile and share success stories of women entrepreneurs in the ICT and smart technology-based industry; and to prepare APEC women for business opportunities in the 4th Industrial Revolution.

Women's Access to Financial Services

This self-funded project “Women's Access to Financial Services – Data in the APEC Region” proposes to conduct of a survey on the number of women having access to various financial services that support women's participation in starting up and expanding existing women's businesses. The project aims to encourage economies to set targets to work towards developing relevant policies of financial inclusion programs.

Women's Leadership

Recognizing that increasing the participation of women in economic activities will serve as a catalyst to promote economic growth, Japan proposed the project 'Individual Action Plan (IAP) for the Enhancement of the Ratio of Women's Representation in Leadership'. Every year since 2015 to 2020, APEC economies are asked to submit their action plans, which serve as mechanisms for measurable and aspirational voluntary goals to which economies could work toward by the end of 2020. In order to further promote women's representation in leadership and accelerate the voluntary goals and the momentum of the initiative of each economy, this project also explores and takes stock of good practices of the policies, as well as actions taken for promoting women's representation in leadership through the mid-term review study and public-private dialogue held as a side event during the WEF 2017.

Women's Entrepreneurship

The Women's Entrepreneurship in APEC (WE-APEC) initiative, launched in 2014, examined each economy's efforts with respect to business networks, private-sector initiatives, and government services in support of women's entrepreneurship. Summaries of all 21 economies, including details about their respective networks, initiatives, and services, can be accessed and enhanced to strengthen eco-systems that support women's entrepreneurship. The WE-APEC online platform (www.we-apec.com) is a dynamic directory of service providers for women-owned businesses across APEC and provides a way for governments, the private sector, business networks and entrepreneurs to connect. This initiative is very helpful for connecting business network, the private sector, and government services in the Asia – Pacific to support women entrepreneurs. To make it work better, capacity building activities will be implemented and the WE-APEC platform will be improved as well to include a mobile platform for better use with cell phones.

Women as Prime Movers of Inclusive Business

The APEC Women as Prime Movers of Inclusive Business Project was approved in 2016 for implementation until the end of 2017 in collaboration with the IEG. This Project looks into the broader aspect of Inclusive Business (IB) both in theory and practice, and zooms into how women's economic empowerment serves as vital contribution in the development, scale-up, and replication of IB models in the Asia Pacific region. In support to this, a survey was conducted which aimed to draw out a balanced analysis that would reflect the majority of APEC member economies, and present conclusions and recommendations that would be supportive of APEC as a whole. However, due to the difficulty in gathering inputs for the research study, the 2017 APEC Seminar on Women as Prime Movers of Inclusive Business was held on 26 September 2017 in Hue, Viet Nam to further enhance the content and substance of the study, prior its finalization and publication for circulation to the APEC member economies.



With DTI's Gerardine Millares, Dr. Micah Ramel from Nueva Viscaya State University who presented the research findings and friends from Malaysia.

Women in STEM

Launched in 2016, the APEC Women in STEM initiative involves a range of activities, including an APEC-wide survey of initiatives aimed at strengthening the presence of women in STEM educational programs and careers. To help APEC economies tackle the issue of women in STEM, a framework was developed and endorsed with four key pillars: (1) enabling environment; (2) education; (3) employment; and (4) entrepreneurship. Steps in 2017 include: organizing a capacity building workshop on Women in STEM Framework; identifying private sector partners who can serve as co-champions of the APEC initiative; bringing PPSTI formally on board as a cross-fora partner; and developing an implementation work plan based on outcomes of the Workshop.

Annex B: Partnerships with Other APEC Fora

The PPWE has partnered with other APEC Fora to incorporate gender equality and women's empowerment into their sector-specific public-private dialogues, ministerial meetings, and projects and programs to ensure that barriers to women's economic empowerment are addressed across sectors.

Economic Committee (EC)

The project "Capacity Building for the Reduction of Educational Gender Gaps through Structural Reforms" was launched to enhance education with equal opportunities for women in APEC economies. With this purpose, the project focuses on improving the capacity of civil servants to adapt, design, implement and evaluate gender gap reduction policies. The project is directly related to the APEC New Strategy for Structural Reform (ANSSR), as well as the SME and Women Development pillar, which has driven the recent activities of the Economic Committee.

Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG)

Recognizing that the Asia-Pacific is the most natural disaster-affected region, the PPWE collaborated with the EPWG to identify and address the needs and concerns of women and girls in emergency preparedness and post-disaster recovery and resilience. The outcome of the PPWE project "Good Practices of Women Entrepreneurship in Local Communities in the Process of Local Reconstruction" has been shared with the EPWG as a valuable reference for achieving inclusive and sustainable recovery in the post-disaster phase, which can also contribute to the enhanced linkage between the two working groups.

Human Resources Development Working Group (HRDWG)

Cooperative efforts are being explored to improve labor market efficiency and the management of labor mobility, and deepen regional and economic integration and people-people connectivity. This work will contribute to ongoing efforts to fully integrate women in the economy.

HRDWG and Health Working Group (HWG)

Full participation of women in the economy is essential to achieve inclusive economic growth; however, women's ability to access economic opportunities is sometimes hindered by health concerns. Thus, the PPWE is collaborating with the HRDWG and HWG on the "Healthy Women, Healthy Economies" initiative. A Policy Toolkit was developed to address health-related barriers specific to women so they can join, remain and rise in the work force. The Policy Toolkit includes policy recommendations and practices on: workplace health and safety; health access and awareness; gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health; and work/life balance. The Policy Toolkit can serve as a guide to APEC economies in implementing actions on a voluntary basis and choosing actions appropriate for their economy.

In 2016, APEC is working to equip governments and businesses with the tools needed to implement elements of the toolkit. A forum on the toolkit implementation will be held in August and will include a presentation of the business and economic cases on application of the toolkit.

HRDWG and Policy Partnership on Science, Technology and Innovation (PPSTI)

Human resources development in the digital field is a universal matter and it is vital for economics' sustainable growth. However, gender gap trends persist as the workforce moves toward new and emerging roles in STEM fields, which continue to outpace the gender gap, causing women to lose out on tomorrow's best job opportunities and prevent many economies from reaching their sustainable development. The underrepresentation of women in STEM is due to many factors, such as women are lacking female role models, and many environments are still discriminatory.

Accordingly, the APEC Gendered Innovation for Technology and Science (GIFTS) is developed in collaboration with HRDWG and PPSTI, aiming to provide best practices as female role models and a workshop to establish a nurturing environment.

Fifteen best practices examples were surveyed. These will serve as a roadmap to set up outstanding female role models and a guide to learning about role models for STEM women in different career stages. These experiences will provide the impetus to transform women's participation in the future jobs and empower them to contribute to sustainable economic growth.

Transportation Working Group (TPTWG)

Women are far less likely than men to work in the transportation sector, both in absolute numbers and as compared to their labor market participation within their respective Economies. In addition, women are more susceptible to economic marginalization if transportation networks, connecting them employment, health services, and educational opportunities, are unsafe for their use. The Transportation Working Group (TPTWG) is host to the Women in Transportation (WiT) Task Force which has developed a framework (WiT Framework) for benchmarking and tracking the participation and influence of women transportation workers, entrepreneurs, leaders, and travelers. The WiT Framework, which was endorsed by APEC Transportation Ministers in October 2015, identifies five key outcome “pillars” that Economies can use to help organize their own efforts to boost women's opportunities, with 18 specific outcomes listed to support policy engagement in this arena. The five pillars are: education; entry into the sector; retention; leadership; and access and use of transportation systems. By linking the goals of the pillars with concrete activities and metrics that will be carried out by volunteer economies in their own pilot projects, the WiT Framework provides a roadmap to success for policy makers and industry representatives working to facilitate change.

Currently four economies (Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and the United States) are leveraging the WiT Framework to structure a pilot project that will produce a policy response to a specific challenge or impediment embodied in one of these five pillars. It is anticipated that these pilot programs will serve as models of how data, global best practices on women's issues, and tailor-made policy solutions enacted by government through collaboration with industry can help improve women's opportunities in all facets of the transportation sector.

(Source: https://apec.org/Meeting-Papers/Sectoral-Ministerial-Meetings/Women/2017_women).

WomenBizPH Participation Overseas

APEC Peru 2016



Public-Private Dialogue on Women and the Economy (PPDWE)



Upper photo: Chit Juan (left) with Susan Santos de Cardenas (right) visits women-owned handicraft shops in Peru

Global Summit of Women 2017: Beyond Womenomics: Accelerating Access Tokyo, Japan | May 11-13



The Philippine Delegation with Vice-President, Leni Robredo



WomenBizPH Members (L-R) Chiqui Escareal-Go, Boots Garcia, Jeannie Javelosa, Bea Tan and Chit Juan

ASEAN Forum on Fostering Women's Entrepreneurship Singapore | June 9, 2017



Philippine team at the ASEAN Forum on Fostering Women's Entrepreneurship includes Rodora Babaran of the ASEAN secretariat (Left), Kathleen Aquino of the Great Women Project and Mercy Alcantara of DTI.

World Leaders' Roadmap Towards Prosperity for All

The ASEAN Business and Investment Summit 2017 (ABIS 2017) is a three-day conference that presents the premiere annual business event of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council that brings attention to the business, investment opportunities, issues, and directions in the ASEAN today. It is organized to serve as a platform for conversations among regional and global stakeholders in the ASEAN Economic Community. These stakeholders are expected to be business leaders, public personalities, entrepreneurs, and entities considered as thought-leaders in their respective fields.



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau showered praises for the women micro-entrepreneurship project being led by the Philippine Commission on Women, a program funded by his country. Trudeau faced some Filipina businesswomen and beneficiaries of the Gender-Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women (GREAT Women) Project on Monday, November 13 at the Yuchengco Museum in Makati City.

(Read full article here: <https://www.rappler.com/world/regions/asia-pacific/188331-justin-trudeau-great-women-project-asean-summit-2017-philippines>)

Father-Daughter tandem contributes to successful entrepreneurship

Last March 27, 2018 the Women's Business Council of the Philippines' (WomenBizPH), an advocacy group for women economic development, brought together a symposium featuring father-daughter success stories in managing their family businesses and how it molds better family relationships.

The first session was on the role of the father as a coach, which featured multi-awarded motivational speaker and businessman Francis Kong and his daughter Rachel Kong, CEO of their family business Success Options Inc. Francis shared that when coaching your daughter, or your son, you should not be telling her/him *how to do it* but *why she/he should do it*. Guidance is key but should not be shielded from making any mistakes as this is equally important to reach any success.



L-R: With moderator and emcee, RJ Ledesma, Francis Kong listens to daughter Rachel sharing her journey working with her father.

This was followed by a session on the role of the father as a manager of his daughter's career, tackled by award-winning blogger and photographer, Tricia Gosingtian, together with her father, Josiah Go, the most awarded business educator of the country, also marketing guru and entrepreneur. They shared how they needed to understand each other's business or work, to better understand each other, as well as develop their relationship as father-daughter, manager-talent. Tricia needed to explain how blogging can be work to her father who didn't understand what work she was doing while at home while Josiah taught Tricia the business and marketing side of running her career. Eventually, Tricia taught her father who came up with his own blog. Together, they form a manager-talent relationship where both benefitted from their different perspectives.



Father as coach Josiah Go shared how he did not initially understand how blogging can be called work and how later on it was Tricia who taught him what to do to write a blog.

Finally, sisters Donna and Sheila Lina, both successful in e-commerce, film production, business research, and marketing, together with their father, Bert Lina, a successful entrepreneur who has established his own private conglomerate, the Lina Group of Companies, talked about the role of a father as a mentor. Bert, running the family businesses for many years admitted his lack of time for his family, especially when both his daughters were very young, needing to work hard to ensure his family's comfort, something he did not experience as a young man who needed to help his family by studying and working at the same time. In his absence, he acknowledged his wife's, Sylvia, constant presence in their children's lives as the most important factor that kept their family together. It was after both daughters graduated, that Bert was now in the position to build father-daughter relationships, by mentoring his two daughters who, have come up with their own businesses to run, with work now as a common bond among father and daughters.



Sheila Lina (standing) shares her struggles in finding herself in the business world and together with her sister, Donna (seated on the right), found themselves under the mentorship of their father, Bert (seated at the center), who have guided them in putting up their own businesses.

Overall, family-tandem business relationships, whether it is father/mother-daughter or father/mother-son, have their own advantages for as long as there is constant communication, dedication and understanding. At the end of the day, a strong and stable family makes a strong and stable business.

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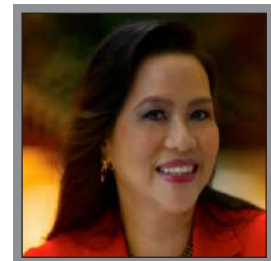
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