



Project#13: Voices and Action of Young Women Leaders and Entrepreneurs, 2020-2021

Objective:

Enhance capacities and create an enabling environment for youth and emerging young leaders and women micro-entrepreneurs to allow them to participate in entrepreneurship & business-related advocacy action and dialogue with the authorities. This will contribute to the improvement of equal opportunities and the strengthening of their socio-economic rights.

Funding:

35,358 USD funded by USAID through Pact Cambodia

Implementing Partners:

Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)

Target Areas:

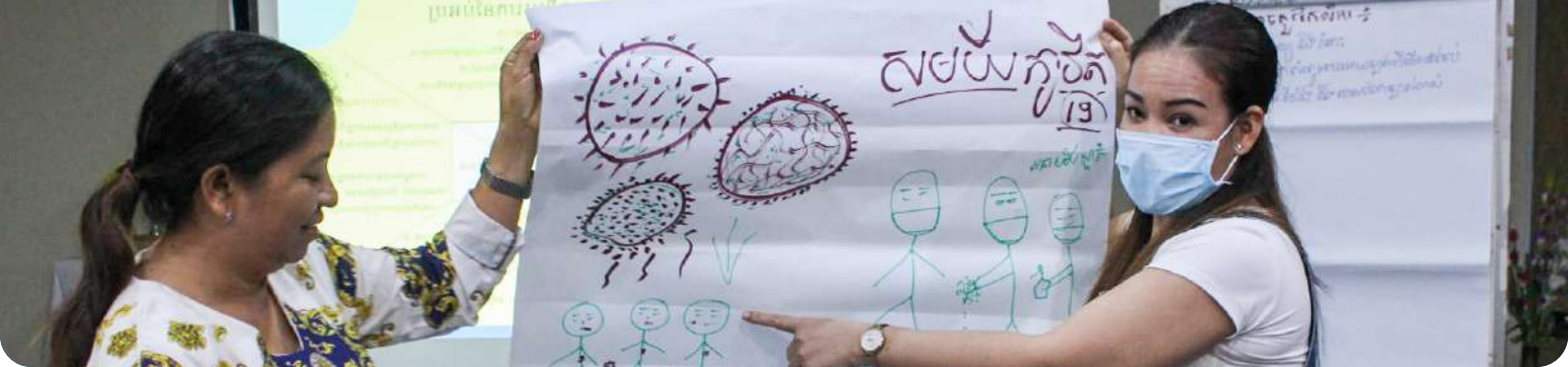
all Khans in Phnom Penh





Activities and Results:

- 13.1 The project has built the capacity of 41 Young Women Entrepreneurs (YWE) in Phnom Penh. They received two 3-day training courses on advocacy with key decision makers. Individual khan advocacy action plans have been developed and documented by YWE in order to be implemented in 2021. Moreover, the policy papers have already been submitted to all key decision makers to find solutions and influence policy change. This has been done according to the issues raised by YWE during the training and the inputs they provided on the draft law on social protection and the measured related to equality cards announced by the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training in the Prakas 404.
- 13.2 Key challenges faced by female street vendors in Phnom Penh, as well as their requests, have been well documented and integrated into our advocacy plan. The project identified and prioritized 23 specific issues faced by female street vendors through online surveys and face-to-face interviews with 131 women. A number of 41 volunteers were trained for this purpose. Based on these prioritised issues, the project developed 12 policy papers with key recommendations and officially submitted them to all local authorities in Phnom Penh, both at the khan level and at the Capital City Administration, highlighting the specific issues of women street vendors in each khan. Based on these issues, the project has supported female advocates to develop nine advocacy plans after the training on “Young Female Leaders and Advocacy”. These female street vendor issues have been reported on in the media, esp. RFA, RFI, and VoD have broadcasted about this topic. As a first result of this advocacy effort, the Governor of Khan Daun Penh Administration confirmed that she is willing to provide a proper space for street vendors and others by reorganising the Road Number 98 as a tourist market (“Walking street 24-hour marketplace”). Female street vendors will be allowed to run their businesses and the government has requested street vendors to sell safe and healthy foods and keep a clean and hygienic environment.
- 13.3 Other khan administrations postponed the proposed dialogues on street vendor issues, due to the global epidemic and the Covid19 community outbreaks, while other local administrations did not allow any gathering except in special cases and under the condition of an attendance limited to 20 participants, thus affecting project implementation.
- 13.4 Second, IDEA is representative of the informal economic sector and was selected as a member of the Selection Committee for Equality Card Registration at the national level. Some of the inputs raised by IDEA on the draft law on social protection and the National Social Security Fund, as well as on the National Development Framework led by the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) were reviewed and improved. In particular, they focus on benefits and documents relevant to vulnerable women: equality card, family and residence books, and cash assistance.



- 13.5 Although the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT) has issued a Prakas on the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) notification for the informal sector, available support and assistance for members of IDEA has not been officially recognised due to the terms and conditions of NSSF. Development partners such as Germany confirmed its support on equality cards for street vendors, and the EU confirmed its support on street vendors for social protection, USAID supports street vendors through the WE-ACT project from 2021 onward after the effects from Covid-19. And local and international media paid more attention to street vendors issues. Moreover, the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) received inputs on street vendors’ issues, as well as recommendations in preparation for the 2021 National Conference on National Development.

Challenges:

- 13.6 Young Women leaders (YWL) are concerned about their security during the interviews which fall under the activities restricted by market authorities if face-to-face meetings are necessary in order to provide explanations of the survey forms.
- 13.7 The street vendors who took part in the training courses keep coming and going, making it quite hard to run the project.
- 13.8 Frequent communication with street vendors is needed, as they are confronted with various issues and require one voice in advocacy work.
- 13.9 Young street vendors attending the training courses had difficulties in raising issues, while some street vendors were still in school and had little understanding of the issues.
- 13.10 Slow responses from khan and sangkat administrations regarding the meeting that API & IDEA proposed for small scale engagement between street vendors and API.

The Way Forward:

- 13.11 Based on the success of this project in Phnom Penh, the project will be expanded to the Battambang and Siem Reap provinces in order to build capacity and engage with the local authorities to address the issues of vulnerable women street vendors, following the key strategies listed below:
 - Strategy 1:** Demand-based issue identification (identify street vendors’ day to day business operation issues after Covid-19, and conduct a legal & policy framework analysis of the related issues);
 - Strategy 2:** Capacity building to influence policy;
 - Strategy 3:** Develop a joint advocacy action plan with WE Act partners;
 - Strategy 4:** Facilitate advocacy and policy influencing / regular policy dialogues;
 - and **strategy 5:** Business skills development for street vendors