

CAMBODIA
LEADERSHIP
REVIEW

50

'Khmer Women Voices'



2026

Partner's Note

Building More Than Businesses

When Cambodia Leadership Review first approached me about this edition, I didn't hesitate. This wasn't just another opportunity to partner on a publication, it was an invitation to do the work I've built my entire career around.

This edition isn't just celebrating titles or milestones. It's honoring something quieter, the extra layer of responsibility we carry as women, often unspoken, always present. The balance between leading boldly and holding everything else together. The weight of being everywhere at once, and making it look effortless when it never is.

Every woman featured in this edition is, in her own right, a builder.

Some have built companies from the ground up, entering industries where few women had gone before them. Others have built institutions, expanding access to healthcare, education, and financial services in communities that needed it most.

Many have built something harder to quantify: credibility, in spaces that did not always make room for them, earned through consistency, competence, and quiet persistence over time.

What stood out most, across every conversation that shaped this publication, was not simply what these women had achieved, but how they achieved it. Because this is not the usual story of leadership, the one measured only by titles and milestones.

Behind each achievement is a layer of responsibility that rarely makes it into the bio or the headline.

To negotiate the boardroom, and still show up for our families and communities.

Championed Both at Home & Abroad

To build a business, a team, a reputation, a body of expertise, while carrying weight the world rarely accounts for, and making it look effortless when it never is. That balance is not given to us. We build it too, every single day, often in silence.

Professional credibility to match capability

At Grow4Growth Training & Development, I spend my days working with professionals and business owners, many of them women, on exactly this kind of building: developing the leadership presence, strategic clarity, and professional credibility to match their capability.

I have seen how often talented women are underestimated, and how much changes once their expertise is given proper visibility.

Through my work with CamWEN and AWEN Cambodia, and as Chairwoman of the AmCham Cambodia Women's Steering Committee, I carry that same conviction onto regional and international stages, that Cambodian women's contributions deserve to be seen, valued, and championed both at home and abroad.

That is precisely what this edition sets out to do.

CLR KHMER WOMEN VOICES 2026

The fifty women featured here represent banking, healthcare, education, technology, law, hospitality, and beyond.

They are founders and executives, innovators and mentors, women who have each carried their own weight in their own way, and kept building anyway.

Together, they reflect the scale and sophistication of what Cambodian women are creating across every sector of the economy, and the platform they have rightfully earned.

Female Decision-Makers

What we do is never only for ourselves. It is for the young woman who watches her mother run a business before school lets out.

It is for the girl who has never met a female engineer, a female CEO, a female decision-maker, until she reads a story like the ones in this edition and realizes she could be that too.

This edition is our way of saying: we see you, we see what it costs, and we see what you've built despite it.

It has been an honor to partner with Cambodia Leadership Review in bringing these stories to a wider audience; and to every young woman who picks up this edition and sees herself, even a little, in these pages: keep building. We're right beside you.

Kim Tol Tan is the Founder & CEO of Grow4Growth Training & Development, a leading professional training company dedicated to developing leadership, business, and professional skills across Cambodia. Through her work, she has become a respected advocate for leadership development, entrepreneurship, and capacity building.

She also serves as Executive Director of the Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Network (CamWEN), Cambodia Focal Point for the ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network (AWEN), and Chairwoman of the AmCham Cambodia Women's Steering Committee, championing women's entrepreneurship, leadership, mentorship, and greater participation across the private sector.

Kim is also the host of the Women Shaping Cambodia show, where she shares the stories of influential women helping shape Cambodia's future. Through her leadership, she continues to advance women's economic empowerment and strengthen Cambodia's entrepreneurial ecosystem.



Kim Tol Tan
Founder & CEO of Grow4Growth Training & Development

Editors Note

Showcasing Cambodia's Greatest Strength: Its People

When we launched Cambodia Leadership Review in 2024, our vision was simple: to create a publication that celebrates the people behind Cambodia's progress. Around the world, Cambodia is increasingly recognised for its economic growth, expanding infrastructure, rising investment, and growing role within ASEAN. Yet behind every successful business, investment, and industry are leaders whose vision, resilience, and determination are helping shape the Kingdom's future. Their stories deserve to be told.

Cambodia Leadership Review was created to tell those stories.

Through in-depth interviews with business leaders, entrepreneurs, policymakers, investors, and innovators, our goal has always been to provide readers with meaningful insight into the people driving Cambodia forward. While we are proud to celebrate Cambodian success stories for local readers, we also see the publication as a platform that introduces Cambodia's business community to international investors, executives, and decision-makers.

As Cambodia becomes increasingly connected to regional and global markets, it is important the world sees not only the opportunities available here, but also the talented people creating them.

Every interview has reinforced one belief: Cambodia's long-term success will be driven by leadership.

Strong leaders build strong organisations. Those organisations create jobs, attract investment, develop talent, and strengthen communities. By sharing these conversations, we hope to document Cambodia's economic journey while inspiring the next generation of business leaders.

Celebrating Khmer Women in Business

This special edition, 50 Khmer Women Voices 2026, marks an important milestone for Cambodia Leadership Review.

For the first time, we have dedicated an entire publication to celebrating Khmer women in business and leadership. Across banking, healthcare, education, technology, logistics, real estate, hospitality, law, media, and entrepreneurship, we met remarkable women leading organisations, building companies, creating employment, and helping shape Cambodia's future.

Their stories reflect a broader transformation taking place across the Kingdom. Cambodian women are increasingly leading major institutions, founding successful businesses, driving innovation, and mentoring future leaders. This edition is our way of recognising their contribution while ensuring their voices are heard both in Cambodia and internationally.

A Partnership for Greater Impact

This publication would not have been possible without our partnership with Kim Tol Tan and Grow4Growth Consultant.

CLR KHMER WOMEN VOICES 2026

From the beginning, we shared a common goal: to create a platform that celebrates Khmer women while encouraging greater visibility for Cambodia's growing community of female business leaders. Together, we have been able to expand the reach of Cambodia Leadership Review and introduce these inspiring stories to an even wider audience.

One of the most encouraging themes to emerge throughout this edition is the increasingly international outlook of Cambodia's women business leaders.

Many now lead regional operations, work with multinational organisations, attract international investment, and generate revenue well beyond Cambodia's borders. Others are speaking at international conferences, receiving global recognition, and representing Cambodia through international partnerships and media. This reflects an important shift. Cambodia is no longer simply attracting international business—it is producing internationally competitive leaders whose expertise and ambition are gaining recognition around the world.

Leadership That Creates Opportunity

Almost every interview shared a common theme: leadership is about creating opportunities for others. Whether through mentorship, education, healthcare, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, or community development, these women are investing in the next generation while helping raise professional standards across their industries. That may be the greatest lesson throughout this publication—that leadership is measured not only by personal success, but by the opportunities we create for those who follow.

Looking Ahead

Cambodia is entering an exciting new chapter. Its economy is becoming more sophisticated, more internationally connected, and increasingly driven by innovation and talent. The fifty women featured in this edition represent that future. They come from different industries and backgrounds, but together they demonstrate the professionalism, ambition, and leadership shaping modern Cambodia.

On behalf of everyone at Cambodia Leadership Review, I would like to thank every contributor who generously shared their experiences and perspectives.

My hope is that readers—whether in Phnom Penh, Singapore, Sydney, London, or New York—finish this edition with a greater appreciation not only for Cambodia's economic progress, but for the remarkable people driving it.

Because ultimately, Cambodia's greatest strength has always been—and will always be—its people.



Harrison White

Founder & CEO - CIR Media

Editor - Cambodia Leadership Review



Anna KOY

**Cambodian Cultural Ambassador
Model & Actress**

Anna is a Cambodian model, actress, entrepreneur, and cultural advocate who has built a strong platform celebrating Khmer heritage and inspiring young women across the Kingdom. As 1st Runner-Up of Miss Grand Cambodia 2023 and Brand Ambassador for the Ministry of Women's Affairs, she uses her influence to promote cultural pride, women's empowerment, and community development. Through her public work and advocacy, Anna continues to champion positive change while showcasing Cambodia's culture, talent, and identity to audiences both at home and abroad.

Aphivath KEAT
CEO & Founder
Aphi Group of Companies

Aphivath is an entrepreneur and business leader who has built a successful portfolio spanning advertising, travel, wedding planning, and international brand distribution. Recognised with multiple business and leadership awards, including at the ASEAN level, and an alumna of Harvard Business School's Owner/President Management Program, she is known for her strategic vision and drive for innovation. Through her leadership, Aphivath continues to contribute to Cambodia's growing private sector while inspiring more women to pursue entrepreneurship and leadership.



Oknha Dr. Carolyn PUNG
Vice Chairperson
Canadia Group

Oknha Dr. Carolyn Pung is Vice Chairperson of Canadia Group, one of Cambodia's largest conglomerates. Under her leadership, the group has expanded into education and healthcare, with Dr. Pung Carolyn co-founding Intercare Hospital and founding Canadian International School of Phnom Penh, École Française Internationale, and Norea International School. Her focus also extends to international partnerships and development, notably with the recent signing of OCIC's financing agreement with the U.S. DFC for Techo International Airport.

Chantheara SOK
Chief Financial Officer
Phillip Bank Plc

Chantheara is a finance professional with more than a decade of experience across banking, microfinance, auditing, and corporate finance. Currently serving as Chief Financial Officer of Phillip Bank Cambodia, she previously held senior leadership roles within the financial sector and began her career with a Big Four accounting firm. An ACCA Fellow (FCCA), Chantheara is recognised for her expertise in financial management and her contribution to the continued development of Cambodia's banking industry.





Channda SOK
CEO
MekongNet

Channda is a Cambodian technology leader helping drive the Kingdom's digital transformation through innovation, connectivity, and inclusive growth. As CEO of MekongNet, one of Cambodia's pioneering internet service providers, she has played a key role in expanding digital infrastructure and internet access nationwide. Passionate about online safety, digital literacy, and opportunity, Channda continues to champion greater participation of women and young people in Cambodia's rapidly evolving digital economy.

Chenda THACH
Founder
Wowee Advertising

Chenda is a Cambodian entrepreneur and founder of Wowee Advertising & Events, a fast-growing company delivering corporate events, brand activations, exhibitions, and special events for some of Cambodia's leading brands. Building on this success, she recently launched Urban Home KH, a furniture business serving the country's growing property market. Through her entrepreneurial journey, Chenda continues to demonstrate the creativity, resilience, and ambition of Cambodia's next generation of women business leaders.



Chenda KEO
Chief of Human Resources
Forte Group

Chenda is a senior financial services executive and one of Cambodia's leading human capital and governance professionals. As Group Chief Human Resources Officer at Forte Group, she oversees talent, leadership development, governance, and organizational strategy across Cambodia, Laos, and Singapore. With leadership experience spanning banking, legal services, and insurance, Chenda has played a key role in strengthening institutions, developing future leaders, and helping position Cambodian businesses to compete successfully on the regional stage.

Davy KONG
Partner
DFDL Cambodia

Davy is a Partner at DFDL Cambodia with nearly two decades of experience advising local and international investors on commercial, regulatory, transactional matters and major development projects. Her legal practice covers corporate, real estate, hospitality, trust, construction, environment and special economic zones. As a Board Governor and Co-Chair of Real Estate and Construction Committee at AmCham Cambodia, Davy plays an active role in shaping industry dialogue and investment discussions. Through her legal expertise and leadership, Davy continues to contribute to Cambodia's evolving business and investment landscape.





Dyphan PHIRUM

Founder & CEO

MUCH Mobile Healthcare Co., Ltd.

Dyphan is a nurse entrepreneur and founder of MUCH Mobile Healthcare, Cambodia's pioneering home healthcare provider. Inspired by years of frontline nursing experience and personal caregiving challenges, she has dedicated her career to improving elderly care, long-term care, and healthcare access for families. An ASEAN Women Entrepreneurship Award recipient, Dyphan is committed to building a culture of compassion, dignity, and innovation while inspiring more women to lead and create meaningful social impact.

Frandara (Dara) KHUON

Chief Executive Officer

TrueMoney Cambodia, Myanmar & Malaysia Cluster

Frandara (Dara) is a fintech leader with experience spanning Cambodia, Myanmar, and Malaysia, helping drive the growth of digital financial services across the region. Known for her resilience, global perspective, and people-first leadership style, she has successfully balanced executive leadership with family life. Through her work, Dara continues to advance financial inclusion while inspiring more women to pursue leadership roles and build careers without limits.



Jolyda SOU

Founder and Managing Director

Prestige Consulting

Jolyda is a Cambodian entrepreneur, advisor, and Fulbright Scholar working at the intersection of investment, technology, and economic development. She helps investors, businesses, and development partners unlock opportunities across Cambodia and emerging markets. Jolyda has supported the mobilization of millions of dollars into SMEs, tech startups, and high-impact initiatives, and currently manages investment and development funds. She is passionate about entrepreneurship, innovation, and building inclusive ecosystems that drive sustainable economic growth.

Kim HOAN PHENG

Founder and Managing Director

TWPR Communications

Kim is a communications strategist, entrepreneur, and business leader with more than a decade of experience in public relations, strategic communications, and brand development. As founder of TWPR, she has helped corporate and public sector clients build impactful narratives and meaningful stakeholder engagement. Beyond communications, Kim is an active entrepreneur with interests spanning healthcare, talent management, and lifestyle businesses. Passionate about leadership and people development, she is committed to empowering teams, nurturing talent, and building businesses that create lasting impact.





Kinkesa KIM
Managing Director
APS Cambodia

Kinkesa is a leading real estate professional known for her expertise in market research, advisory services, and strategic planning. Having played a key role in shaping industry insights and supporting major investment decisions, she has become a respected voice within Cambodia's property sector. Through her leadership at APS Cambodia, Kinkesa continues to champion greater professionalism, transparency, and data-driven decision-making, helping strengthen confidence in the country's evolving real estate market.

Dr. Kolap TEP
Rector
Phnom Penh International University

Kolap is a higher education leader dedicated to advancing academic excellence, innovation, and international collaboration in Cambodia. As Rector of Phnom Penh International University, she has led the institution's transformation through digital innovation, quality assurance, research, and global partnerships. Passionate about developing future-ready graduates, Kolap also champions youth leadership, women's empowerment, and sustainable development, helping strengthen Cambodia's higher education sector while preparing the next generation to compete on the global stage.



Kounila KEO
Co-Founder
Mekhala Radiant

Kounila is a communications strategist, entrepreneur, and former journalist who has built a reputation for leading impactful advocacy and public engagement campaigns across Southeast Asia. Recognised in the Forbes 30 Under 30 list, she combines expertise in media, public policy, and strategic communications to champion issues ranging from youth empowerment to environmental sustainability. Through her work, Kounila continues to help shape meaningful conversations while mentoring and inspiring the next generation of regional leaders.

Krasna CHAM
Chief Executive Officer
SOMA Group

Krasna is a prominent business leader and the first female Chief Executive Officer of Soma Group, one of Cambodia's leading locally owned conglomerates. Known for her commitment to inclusive leadership and sustainable development, she has become a strong advocate for gender equality and greater female representation in the corporate sector. Through her leadership, Krasna continues to help shape Cambodia's economic future while inspiring more women to pursue executive and leadership roles across the region.





Laura MAM
Chief Executive Officer
Baramey Productions

Laura is a singer-songwriter, producer, and creative entrepreneur who has played a pioneering role in the growth of Cambodia's original music movement. As co-founder of Baramey Production, she has helped develop some of the country's most influential artists while championing original content and intellectual property rights. Blending creativity with business leadership, Laura continues to elevate Cambodian music on the global stage while inspiring a new generation of artists, creators, and women leaders.

Layheng PHAN
Founder
CL Media Network

Layheng is a marketing strategist, entrepreneur, and founder of CL Media Network, dedicated to helping businesses strengthen their brands and accelerate growth. With expertise spanning marketing, sales, media, and business development, she has supported hundreds of SMEs in building stronger market positions and achieving measurable results. Passionate about entrepreneurship and knowledge sharing, Layheng is also a trainer and mentor who continues to empower business owners and future leaders through practical, results-driven learning and professional development.



Lynda HIM
Chief Executive Officer
Primalis Corporation

Lynda is a business leader in Cambodia's agricultural sector, overseeing one of the country's largest rice milling and export operations. Through her leadership, Cambodian fragrant rice varieties have expanded into markets across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. As Vice Chairwoman of the Cambodia Rice Federation, she also contributes to industry development, trade advocacy, and policy dialogue. Passionate about quality, innovation, and global competitiveness, Lynda continues to help strengthen the international reputation of Cambodian rice.

Mar AMARA
Senior Group Chief Financial Officer,
ACLEDA Bank Plc.

Mar Amara is one of Cambodia's most experienced banking executives, with a career spanning more than three decades in finance, governance, and strategic leadership. Having joined ACLEDA during its early years, she has played a key role in its transformation into one of the country's leading financial institutions. A strong advocate for corporate governance, sustainable finance, and continuous learning, Mar continues to help shape the future of Cambodia's banking sector through her leadership, expertise, and long-term vision.





Molika MEAS

iCare

Co-Founder & Group CEO

Molika is a social entrepreneur and business leader dedicated to improving financial inclusion and quality of life for low-income workers across Cambodia and Laos. As co-founder of iCare Benefits Group, she has helped develop innovative solutions that connect workers with affordable products, services, and financial opportunities. With nearly two decades of experience spanning leadership, financial services, corporate social responsibility, and partnership development, Molika continues to champion inclusive growth and sustainable social impact.

Monypich SOU

Founder & CEO

TUBE Coffee

Monypich is an entrepreneur and co-founder of TUBE Coffee, one of Cambodia's fastest-growing local coffee brands. Since launching its first store in 2017, TUBE Coffee has expanded to 75 stores nationwide, serving customers across Phnom Penh and major provincial cities. Passionate about building a strong Cambodian brand, Monypich has played a key role in the company's growth and success while helping shape the country's evolving café and lifestyle sector. Through her leadership, she continues to champion local entrepreneurship and innovation.



Mom Sophear SREAT

Founder

SOPHIYA Travel & Tours

Mom Sophear is an entrepreneur, tourism leader, and businesswoman who has built a diverse portfolio spanning travel, hospitality, wellness, and lifestyle services. As founder of SOPHIYA Corporation, she has played an active role in promoting Cambodia's tourism industry while supporting sustainable development and international engagement. Beyond business, Mom Sophear is committed to philanthropy and education initiatives, using her leadership platform to create opportunities and contribute to the development of communities across Cambodia.

Muykheng LONG

Investment Officer

Emerging Markets Investment Advisers

Muykheng is an investment professional focused on supporting the growth of emerging businesses across Cambodia and Southeast Asia. As an Investment Officer at Emerging Markets Investment Advisers, she works closely with entrepreneurs and management teams on expansion, fundraising, and long-term value creation. A CFA charterholder and Fulbright Scholar, Muykheng is passionate about connecting capital with opportunity and helping strengthen the next generation of high-growth companies across the region.





Nara KANN
Chief Public Affairs Officer
Manulife Cambodia

Nara is a pioneering insurance and actuarial professional who became Cambodia's first qualified actuary after building her career in the United States. With more than two decades of experience spanning actuarial science, insurance, analytics, and public affairs, she has played a key role in advancing the development of Cambodia's insurance industry. Passionate about innovation, customer-centric solutions, and industry collaboration, Nara continues to help shape the future of financial protection and insurance awareness in the Kingdom.

Nitikar NITH
Senior Associate
Tilleke & Gibbins Cambodia

Nitikar is a legal professional specializing in corporate and commercial matters, advising clients on market entry, regulatory compliance, commercial transactions, and investments in Cambodia. With experience across employment, real estate, energy, and infrastructure sectors, she helps companies navigate the country's evolving legal landscape. Passionate about legal education, Nitikar lectures at the Royal University of Law and Economics and serves on the board of Sala Traju, a Cambodia's leading legal associations, promoting legal knowledge among students and the public.



Omuoy HEANG
Chief Executive Officer
Asia Digital Technology Innovation

Omuoy is a technology entrepreneur, AI governance advocate, and education leader dedicated to advancing digital innovation across Cambodia and the region. Through her work in technology, entrepreneurship, and STEM education, she has empowered thousands of young people, particularly girls and women, to pursue opportunities in the digital economy. Recognised for her contributions to innovation and community leadership, Omuoy continues to champion responsible technology, digital transformation, and the development of future-ready talent.

Phanin HEI
Deputy Director General
Phnom Penh Autonomous Port

Phanin is a senior logistics and infrastructure executive helping guide the growth of Cambodia's maritime and river transport sector. As Deputy Director General of Phnom Penh Autonomous Port, one of the country's largest publicly listed companies on the Cambodia Securities Exchange, she oversees business operations, strategic development, and commercial activities at a key national trade gateway. Through her leadership, Phanin continues to support trade connectivity, sustainable logistics, and infrastructure development while contributing to Cambodia's long-term economic growth.





Pheakdey POK
Chief Financial Officer
J Trust Royal Bank

Pheakdey is a financial executive with nearly two decades of experience spanning banking, auditing, and corporate finance. As Chief Financial Officer of J Trust Royal Bank, she has played a pivotal role in driving financial performance, governance, and long-term business strategy, including the bank's transition following the acquisition of ANZ Royal. Beyond her executive responsibilities, Pheakdey also contributes to corporate governance and industry development through her leadership and board-level involvement across Cambodia's financial sector.

Pheary CHAN
President
Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association

Pheary is an entrepreneur and business leader with decades of experience in Cambodia's beauty, retail, and consumer goods sectors. As President of the Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association (CWEA), she works closely with public and private sector partners to advance women's entrepreneurship, digital transformation, and market access nationwide. Passionate about empowering women through business, leadership, and economic opportunity, Pheary continues to champion initiatives that help women-led enterprises grow, thrive, and contribute to Cambodia's development.



Romny THEAM
Chief External Affairs Officer
ABA Bank

Romny is a banking executive with extensive experience spanning finance, communications, public policy, and stakeholder engagement. As Chief External Affairs Officer of ABA Bank, she plays a key role in strengthening relationships between the bank, its customers, regulators, and the broader community. A Fulbright Scholar with a background in both banking and international development, Romny is passionate about leadership, education, and helping advance Cambodia's financial sector through collaboration, innovation, and sustainable growth.

Rosanich SOU-CLAVERIA
Partner Director, Aleph Group | Exclusive
Representative of TikTok Business in Cambodia

Rosanich is a marketing and digital transformation leader with over a decade of experience in strategy and digital media with MSc from University of Leeds, UK. As Partner Director at Aleph Group, she leads TikTok Business in Cambodia, overseeing market growth, commercial strategy, and ecosystem development nationwide. Her leadership has earned international recognition, including Emerging Business Leader of the Year 2024, Outstanding Leadership Award 2023 (UAE), and finalist status in the Women of the Future Awards Southeast Asia 2019. Beyond corporate leadership, she serves as a university professor, industry expert, and mentor, championing education, youth development, and women's leadership in Cambodia.





Rosette SOK

Senior Associate

Kinstellar Southeast Asia Cambodia

Rosette is a legal professional specializing in corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, capital markets and cross-border investment. Advising a diverse range of international and domestic clients, she has been involved in sophisticated commercial transactions that have contributed to the growth of Cambodia's investment landscape and its increasing regional integration. She helps businesses navigate legal and regulatory complexities with clarity and confidence, supporting both their strategic ambitions and the broader development of a dynamic and investor-friendly market.

Rothsethamony SENG

Co-Founder and CEO

Bamnang Super App

Rothsethamony is a social entrepreneur and education advocate dedicated to expanding opportunities for young people through technology and innovation. As co-founder of Bamnang, she is helping students access housing, mentorship, scholarships, and career pathways across Southeast Asia. With academic experience spanning Cambodia and the United States, including Harvard and MIT, Rothsethamony is passionate about empowering the next generation through education, digital inclusion, and leadership while helping bring Cambodia's voice to the global stage.



Sarita RETH

Actress and Producer

Former Miss Universe Cambodia 2020

Sarita is an actress, producer, and former Miss Universe Cambodia 2020 who has built a career at the intersection of entertainment, storytelling, and social impact. An award-winning artist, she has represented Cambodia on international platforms while using film and media to highlight meaningful stories and cultural identity. Passionate about women's empowerment and creative expression, Sarita continues to inspire audiences through her work while helping elevate Cambodian voices and talent on the global stage.

Sato MOEUN

Founder

Mekong Fine Foods

Sato is an entrepreneur and business leader whose journey from humble beginnings in Siem Reap to the helm of a leading premium food distribution company reflects resilience, determination, and vision. As co-founder of NorKhmer Concepts and Mekong Fine Food, she has helped connect world-class producers with Cambodia's hospitality industry while setting new standards for quality and service. Passionate about entrepreneurship and people development, Sato continues to champion business growth, opportunity, and excellence within Cambodia's evolving food and hospitality sector.





Sivhuang LAY
Managing Director
DICH Academy

Sivhuang is a digital transformation leader and technology education advocate dedicated to preparing Cambodia's next generation for the digital economy. With experience spanning fintech, e-commerce, digital education, and public policy across Cambodia, China, and Europe, she combines industry expertise with academic excellence to bridge the gap between education and workforce needs. Through her leadership, Sivhuang continues to champion innovation, technology skills, and greater opportunities for young people to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

Sokly NOUV
Chief Treasury Officer
Wing Bank

Sokly is a treasury and banking professional with more than a decade of experience in treasury management, financial markets, and corporate banking. Recognised for her expertise in liquidity management, foreign exchange, and strategic treasury operations, she has played an important role in strengthening financial stability and risk management within Cambodia's banking sector. Through her leadership, Sokly continues to support the development of innovative and accessible financial services while helping build a strong foundation for long-term growth.



Solina YEAN
Of Counsel
ANANT Law Firm

Solina is a legal expert specializing in insurance, healthcare, life sciences, and financial regulation, with extensive experience advising international companies operating in Cambodia. Through her work, she has helped support market entry, regulatory compliance, and business expansion across a range of highly regulated sectors. Recognized for her expertise in business and regulatory law, she also contributes to public policy and legal reform initiatives, helping strengthen Cambodia's investment climate and institutional development.



Sopheha LUN
Chief Commercial Officer
International Airport Advertising Corporation

Sopheha is leader with more than a decade of experience driving business growth across Cambodia's automotive, association, and airport media sectors. As Chief Commercial Officer of IAAC Cambodia, she oversees commercial operations across the Kingdom's three international airports, helping connect brands with millions of travelers. Beyond her corporate role, Sopheha is a passionate advocate for women's leadership and inclusion, supporting initiatives that empower more women to step forward, lead, and create meaningful impact within their industries and communities.





Sophoan PHEAN
National Director
Oxfam Cambodia

Sophoan is a development leader with nearly two decades of experience advancing sustainable development across Cambodia and the Southeast Asia region. Specialising in policy, governance, climate resilience, and social protection, she has worked extensively to support vulnerable communities and promote inclusive growth. A strong advocate for gender equality and women's leadership, Sophoan continues to champion initiatives that empower women, strengthen communities, and create lasting social impact through evidence-based policy and development programs.

Sotheavy AT
Founder
Think Plastic

Sotheavy is a communications strategist, storyteller, and environmental advocate who has spent her career using media and digital platforms to drive positive social change. Through her award-winning Think Plastic campaign, she has helped mobilise communities across Cambodia to reduce plastic waste and embrace more sustainable practices. Passionate about empowering others through communication and education, Sotheavy continues to champion environmental awareness, youth leadership, and the advancement of women on both national and regional stages.



Sovattha NEOU
Chief Executive Officer
Impact Hub Phnom Penh

Sovattha is a Cambodian leader with 20+ years of experience advancing sustainable and inclusive development. She enhances entrepreneurship and innovation, enabling entrepreneurs and changemakers to build solutions that create lasting social, environmental, and economic impact. She is dedicated to unlocking the potential of young people and women by creating opportunities to learn, lead, and thrive. She believes in nurturing the next generation of leaders, empowering them to accelerate their growth and shape a more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable Cambodia.

Srey Oeun CHEM
Head of Corporate Affairs
Smart Axiata

Srey Oeun is a sustainability and corporate affairs leader with extensive experience spanning development, research, education, and the private sector. Passionate about environmental protection, social development, and women's leadership, she has represented Cambodia in regional and international initiatives focused on conservation, youth empowerment, and gender equality. In her current role, Srey Oeun helps drive sustainability initiatives across digital inclusion, environmental stewardship, community development, and governance, contributing to a more sustainable and inclusive future for Cambodia.





Sreypoch HENG
Compliance Director
Wink Bank

Sreypoch is a governance and compliance leader with more than 16 years of experience navigating transformation, mergers, and regulatory change within Cambodia's financial sector. As Compliance Director at Wink Bank, she plays a key role in shaping governance frameworks that support innovation, operational excellence, and responsible growth. Passionate about building trust and accountability, Sreypoch continues to champion a stronger, more resilient banking sector while helping create opportunities for future generations of women leaders.

Thyda THAUNG
Founder
Thaung Enterprise

Thyda is an entrepreneur and advocate for sustainable agriculture who has transformed a family salt-farming tradition into a modern Cambodian success story. Inspired by her roots in Kampot, she has combined innovation, environmental stewardship, and community development to bring locally produced salt to international markets. Passionate about creating opportunities for women, youth, and farming communities, Thyda continues to champion sustainable business practices while helping preserve Cambodia's agricultural heritage for future generations.



Tivea CHANTY
Chief Executive Officer
ADVANCED Residence & Property Co., Ltd

Tivea is a real estate entrepreneur and business leader dedicated to advancing professionalism, transparency, and trust within Cambodia's property sector. As CEO of ADVANCED Residence & Property, she has overseen the company's growth from a small team into a large and expanding organization serving residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments. A strong advocate for women's leadership, Tivea has helped cultivate a workplace where women hold the majority of leadership positions, while creating opportunities for future talent to grow and succeed.

Vatey SOTHA
General Manager
Realestate.com.kh

Vatey is a real estate leader with more than a decade of experience in property sales, investment advisory, and business development. As General Manager of Realestate.com.kh, she has worked closely with both local and international investors while helping connect buyers, sellers, and developers across Cambodia's growing property market. Passionate about professionalism, transparency, and industry development, Vatey continues to champion higher standards within the real estate sector while supporting the next generation of women leaders in the industry.





Vanndy IMPHAN
Chief Executive Officer
CBVH Jewellery

Vanndy is an entrepreneur and business leader who has helped transform a family-owned jewelry business into one of Cambodia's leading luxury jewelry brands. With nearly three decades of experience in fine jewelry design, manufacturing, and business development, she is widely recognized for her commitment to craftsmanship, innovation, and leadership. Passionate about mentorship, women's empowerment, and personal growth, Vanndy actively shares her experiences to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs while promoting Cambodian creativity and cultural excellence.

Vicheka CHOURP
Chief Executive Officer
ISF Cambodia (Indochina Starfish Foundation)

Vicheka leads ISF Cambodia (Indochina Starfish Foundation), one of the Kingdom's leading NGOs dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty through education, healthcare, football, and community development. With more than 15 years of leadership experience, she has helped expand the organisation's reach to support nearly 10,000 children and community members annually while championing inclusion, gender equality, and opportunities for Cambodia's most vulnerable young people.



How We Selected the 50 Khmer Women Voices for 2026

The 50 Khmer Women Voices 2026 edition was created to celebrate Cambodian women whose leadership, vision, and achievements are helping shape the Kingdom's future. Rather than focusing solely on senior titles or public profiles, the publication recognizes women who are making a meaningful impact across business, finance, technology, healthcare, education, law, manufacturing, entrepreneurship, hospitality, and many other sectors driving Cambodia's development.

Each leader was considered across four key criteria:

- **Leadership** – Demonstrated leadership, influence, and professional achievement within their industry.
- **Impact** – Meaningful contributions to business, economic development, innovation, or community.
- **Inspiration** – Serving as a role model by helping empower, mentor, or inspire the next generation of Cambodian women.
- **Vision** – A commitment to helping shape Cambodia's future through long-term leadership, collaboration, and positive change.
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The 50 Khmer Women Voices 2026 edition celebrates the remarkable diversity, resilience, and ambition of Cambodian women who are helping build stronger businesses, stronger communities, and a stronger Cambodia.

To nominate a leader for the 2027 edition of Cambodia Leadership Review – 50 Khmer Women Voices, please contact:

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Phnom Penh, Cambodia

OKNHA DR. CAROLYNE PUNG

VICE CHAIRPERSON - CANADIA GROUP



As Vice Chairperson of Canada Group and Chief Executive Officer of Intercare Hospital,, Oknha Dr. Carolyn Pung oversees one of Cambodia's leading international-standard private hospitals while contributing to the group's broader investments across healthcare, education, real estate, and infrastructure.

Throughout her career, she has helped support projects that are shaping Cambodia's long-term economic and social development.

Passionate about expanding access to quality healthcare and creating opportunities for women in leadership, Carolyn believes Cambodia's future will be built through long-term investment, strong institutions, and the development of local talent.

She is also a strong advocate for preventive healthcare, international partnerships, and mentoring the next generation of Cambodian leaders.

In this interview, Oknha Dr. Carolyn Pung reflects on the rise of Khmer women in leadership, strengthening Cambodia's healthcare sector, advancing women's health awareness, balancing long-term development with business leadership, and the legacy she hopes today's women leaders will leave for future generations.

The Rise of Khmer Women in Leadership

CLR: Over the past decade, Cambodia has seen more women step into senior leadership positions across business and society. From your perspective, how has the role of Khmer women leaders evolved, and what more still needs to be done to support the next generation?

When I joined Canada Group about twenty years ago, the country was a very different place. I can say, I have been fortunate to grow with Cambodia's development.

Today, many women hold senior leadership positions across Canada Group and OCIC. Women CEOs lead our insurance division, our malls, our retail, our schools, our real estate sales, our human resources, our blockchain ventures, and several of our property management divisions. Also, we have always prioritized gender equity in compensation and benefits, ensuring every employee, woman or man, has the same opportunities.

The number of women decision-makers and leaders keeps growing, and I am convinced that many more talented women will step into even greater responsibility in the coming years.

Building Cambodia's Healthcare Future

CLR: Through Intercare Hospital and broader investments in healthcare, OCIC Group has become involved in supporting Cambodia's growing private healthcare sector. What opportunities and challenges do you see in improving access to quality healthcare services across the Kingdom?

We started Intercare during Covid, at a time when most people in Phnom Penh still believed that serious treatment meant a flight to Bangkok.

Since then, the hospital has treated more than 70,000 patients and built a team of over 200 medical professionals, with doctors and medical practitioners from Cambodia, the US, Australia, Russia, the Netherlands, Malaysia, Singapore, the UK and the Philippines. Partners like Sunway Healthcare Group, ThinkKids and Livingstone have helped us raise the bar for the medical and healthcare industry locally.

The real challenge remains mindset and perception. The critical success factor is trust in local capability, competency and accuracy.

And trust is earned one consultation, one honest diagnosis, one follow-up call at a time. We have built it slowly, improving constantly with our patients' feedback.

During Covid we were overwhelmed, but it was deeply rewarding to support both the local population and the expatriate community in Phnom Penh with care of international standards. Where we want to take this journey is towards deeper specialty care and better continuity.

We are expanding what we can treat here, with specialists in cardiology, pneumology, psychiatry for mental health and more, so fewer families feel they have to leave the country for anything beyond the basics, and using digital records and telemedicine follow-up so that care doesn't stop at the hospital door.



If we get that right over the next few years, staying in Cambodia for treatment stops being a leap of faith and becomes the obvious choice.

Advancing Women's Health Awareness

CLR: Women's health is becoming an increasingly important topic across the region, including preventive care, maternal health, wellness, and mental health awareness. How important is it for Cambodia to continue strengthening education, awareness, and investment in women-focused healthcare services?

Often, we notice that women are waiting until a symptom is impossible to ignore, until the kids are settled, until it's convenient for everyone but themselves. Changing that timing, getting women into a screening room a year or two earlier, probably saves more lives than almost any single piece of new equipment we could buy.

Our group is committed to prevention and early detection. With Canadia Bank and OCIC, Intercare has been working with our networks to run breast cancer awareness campaigns, maternity health workshops, and complimentary screening drives here in Phnom Penh. These efforts are still modest, with a few hundred women at a time, but we are building something repeatable.

The next step we are pushing for is taking screening outside the capital, with mobile clinics reaching Kampong Cham, Battambang and Siem Reap, where the nearest specialist can be hours away. Closing that distance is where I believe the next real gains will come.

Leadership and Long-Term Development

CLR: OCIC Group continues to play a major role in Cambodia's urban and economic transformation across sectors including infrastructure, education, real estate, and healthcare.

How do you personally approach leadership while balancing long-term national development with the day-to-day realities of managing large projects and teams?

OCIC has always taken the long-term approach. By building infrastructure, bridges, schools and hospitals, we want to create opportunities for our customers. This improves daily life and contributes to the growth of their businesses and their families.

I value staying close to the frontline, to the people actually using what we build: patients at Intercare, families crossing to Chroy Changvar Bay on their way to CamTech University, students earning their International Baccalaureate after ten years at CIS.

Our graduates now study in Europe, the UK, the US, Canada, Australia, Singapore and Japan. We are proud to contribute to developing world-class Cambodian students, and we hope they will return with their overseas experience to help shape the future of Cambodia.

What I find most rewarding today is watching that patience turn into real opportunities, for families and for local and foreign investors.

Koh Pich has real momentum now: with Elysée's business centers filling up and Diamond Bay Garden nearing completion, what the island needs next is more diversity of retail, restaurants, and supermarkets, the everyday life that makes people want to stay, not just visit.

Norea City is entering its growth phase; condos are selling well, and with Norea International School and the Université Francophone d'Asie opening, an ecosystem is taking shape where families can put down roots.

Chroy Changvar Bay continues to mature, with new office spaces, residential communities such as Chroy Changvar Gardens, and expanding public spaces including Jumnom Park and Coconut Park 3, while CamTech University further anchors the area as an education and lifestyle destination.

And next to Techo International Airport, TIA City is our newest chapter, with industrial park opportunities near the Funan Techo Canal and Kampong Speu for investors who want to be positioned early.

So whether it's a family looking for a home in Koh Pich or Norea City, or an investor considering office space or industrial land, there is something at every stage of the pipeline right now.

Legacy and the Next Generation

CLR: Looking ahead, what kind of impact or legacy would you hope today's Khmer women leaders can leave for the next generation of Cambodian women entering business, healthcare, and leadership roles?

I think we can count on today's generation of women leaders to set an example, so that the next generation of young women grows up feeling confident, strong, capable and ambitious.

Concretely, we must continue investing in mentorship now, and provide guidance and open doors. Cambodia already has capable women across business, healthcare, education and public service. My wish for the 2030s is simple: that Cambodian women fulfil their dreams, whatever they choose to build. **CLR**



CHANTHEARA SOK

Chief Financial Officer- Phillip Bank Plc



As Chief Financial Officer of Phillip Bank Plc, Chantheara Sok helps oversee the financial strategy of one of Cambodia's leading commercial banks, guiding the institution through a period of digital transformation, innovation, and continued growth.

Having built her career from the early days of Cambodia's microfinance sector through its evolution into modern commercial banking, she has witnessed firsthand the remarkable development of the Kingdom's financial industry over the past two decades.

Her experience spans auditing, microfinance, and commercial banking, providing a unique perspective on the sector's transformation.

Today, she continues to play a key role in strengthening financial performance, corporate governance, and long-term strategic planning while supporting the bank's commitment to financial inclusion and sustainable growth.

In this interview, Chantheara reflects on Cambodia's evolving banking sector, the future of digital finance and artificial intelligence, the importance of financial literacy, women's leadership in finance, and the skills needed to succeed in an increasingly dynamic industry.

From Microfinance to Commercial Banking

CLR: You have witnessed Cambodia's financial sector evolve from the early days of microfinance to today's increasingly sophisticated commercial banking landscape. What have been the most significant changes that you have observed throughout your career?

When I started in credit at KREDIT Microfinance, our scope covered only loans and deposits. Following our merger to become Phillip Bank, commercial banking introduced a highly diversified landscape—expanding into trade business, payment solutions, and digital advancements.

This merger required a profound shift as we adapted to Singapore working standards, anchored with integrity. Transitioning from a local credit team at KREDIT to a Singaporean corporate structure was initially difficult due to the culture change. Our team struggled with communication; we used to speak only Khmer, whereas this new environment exposed us to foreign colleagues and English, causing initial miscommunication.

Aligning with Singapore's corporate expectations meant establishing higher professional demands, structured roles, and strict institutional integrity.

Overcoming these barriers came down to our commitment to improvement, to make a change. People adapted, learned, and developed themselves. Today, the organization is stabilized and everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.

Looking ahead, technology and AI solutions are pushing us toward digital platforms. Our strategy will focus on that path—more online, as more people are using digital pathways to perform transactions.

Financial Inclusion and Economic Development

CLR: Microfinance has played an important role in expanding access to financial services in Cambodia. How do you see the sector continuing to support entrepreneurs, families, and businesses?

The financial sector still plays a vital role in economic development, but our focus is shifting away from traditional microfinance. While we still provide micro-loans to support small entrepreneurs and families, our ultimate aspiration is to help people upgrade. We want to be the enabler for ambitious people—banking their long-term ambitions rather than just managing their current baseline. This requires a mix of proper financial advice and education. To achieve this at the community level, we work closely with KPY, our local NGO partner focused on financial literacy.

Financial literacy is essential for those who currently have a limited understanding of financial services, and through KPY, we help them build a correct foundational understanding of money management.

Once that foundation is set, we look at how to help them scale further up the economic ladder. Currently, product offerings in Cambodia are still quite small; even wealthy families with significant capital often just purely put their money into fixed deposits.

In the future, I want to see more sophisticated products introduced so they have genuine investment options. By learning to leverage bank loans to expand their businesses while maintaining liquidity for new opportunities, ambitious Cambodians can manage their financial growth from a much stronger position.

Women in Cambodia's Financial Sector

CLR: The banking industry has seen more women step into leadership positions in recent years. From your perspective, what progress has been made and what opportunities remain for the next generation of women leaders in finance?

This is a very good question for Cambodian women. As a developing country, families historically might have chosen to send a son to school over a girl if they could only support one child. Today, access to education is opening up regardless of gender. We see major progress, with many women in leadership across the private sector and the financial industry.

Our Central Bank Governor is a top female leader and a great role model for how women contribute to organizational improvement.

Regarding future opportunities, I do not believe they are divided by gender. Opportunities should not be dictated by gender, but by capacity and skill. As long as we build our skills, maintain a strong capacity, and remain committed to our professions, plenty of opportunities will be there waiting.

Leadership in a Changing Banking Environment

CLR: As CFO of Phillip Bank, how do you approach leadership and financial management as the sector adapts to digitalization, changing customer expectations, and evolving economic conditions?

Banking has changed completely, moving from cash and ATMs to phone QR scans. With everything shifting to digital platforms, cyber security will be a key focus.

My role is no longer just maintaining financial stability, but driving business strategies that use financial data and AI to modernize our operational processes.

To demonstrate Singapore excellence, we look to their highly integrated and regulated market to elevate our internal practices and introduce innovative products.

However, because Cambodia's landscape and regulations are still developing, we must work anchored from local insights to cater to the needs of the people.

We actively collaborate with local regulators, learning this new landscape together as industry practitioners. Ultimately, the key to success is to keep innovating. Everything is new—even with AI, I keep learning every day.

True leadership requires talking directly to the younger generation to understand their expectations, and listening to our customers to solve their specific problems.

Advice for Future Finance Leaders

CLR: Having built a career across different stages of Cambodia's financial sector development, what advice would you give to young Cambodian women interested in pursuing careers in banking, finance, and corporate leadership?

To become a finance leader in the future, there are a lot of opportunities. Young women are now in a completely different environment with far greater accessibility to education platforms, which is a lot easier compared to my past. My advice to them is to focus heavily on building a strong foundational stage. The technical skills required in finance, accounting, and economics are absolutely vital.

Beyond that, it is crucial to adapt to change by learning about new AI tools and developing leadership skills. Even if AI transforms the industry, communication remains a top priority that we must master.

Finally, stay open to challenges and always step out of your comfort zone. The continuous growth of the financial market will provide plenty of opportunities to advance, as long as you maintain your skills and capacity. **CLR**

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CHANNDA SOK

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - MEKONGNET



As CEO Cambodia of MekongNet, the internet services arm of Angkor Data Communication Group, Channda Sok leads one of the Kingdom's longest-established internet service providers, delivering connectivity solutions to households, businesses, and institutions across all 25 provinces of Cambodia.

With a career spanning sales, marketing, creative leadership, and executive management, she has played an important role in supporting Cambodia's digital transformation at a time when reliable internet access has become essential for education, business, and economic development. Under her leadership, MekongNet continues to invest in expanding connectivity while promoting digital literacy, online safety, and customer trust.

In this interview, Channda reflects on the importance of reliable digital infrastructure, expanding opportunities for women and girls in STEM, building a safer online environment, leading through rapid technological change, and how Cambodia's digital economy can create greater opportunities for future generations.

Expanding Digital Access Across Cambodia

CLR: Internet connectivity is becoming increasingly important for education, business, and daily life across Cambodia. From your perspective, how important is improving reliable internet access for communities across both urban and rural areas of the country?

Reliable internet is no longer a convenience in Cambodia. It has become essential infrastructure, as fundamental as roads or electricity. A student in a provincial town now access to the same online course as a student in Phnom Penh. A farmer can check for new technique, selling their products or harvest. A small shop can reach customers far beyond its own district. When connectivity is reliable, distance stops being a barrier to opportunity.

But the word 'reliable' matters as much as 'access.' An unstable connection that drops during an online exam, a video consultation, or a customer payment does not simply inconvenience people. It erodes their trust in the digital economy altogether. At MekongNet, our commitment to serving all 25 provinces reflects a belief that a young person's potential should not be limited by their postcode.

The gap I think about most is not only urban versus rural; it is consistency of quality. Closing that gap is how we make sure the benefits of Cambodia's digital growth are shared widely, not concentrated in a few cities.

When a community comes online reliably for the first time, you see local businesses formalise, you see students reaching beyond their classrooms, and you see families staying connected across borders. That is the real return on connectivity, and it is why this work feels less like a service and more like nation-building.

Technology, Stem, & Women's Opportunities

CLR: Access to technology and digital learning is opening new opportunities for young people, particularly in STEM-related fields. How can better internet access help encourage more Cambodian women and girls to pursue education and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics?

Better internet access is one of the great equalisers for women and girls in Cambodia. So much of the historical barrier to STEM was simply exposure, because you cannot aspire to a career you have never seen. When a girl in a provincial town can watch an engineer explain her work, follow a coding tutorial, or enrol in an online course, the field of what feels possible expands enormously. Connectivity puts a library, a classroom, and a role model in her hands.

It also lowers the practical obstacles that have held many women back. Online learning can fit around family responsibilities and reduce the need to relocate, which for many families is the deciding factor in whether a daughter continues her studies. Remote and flexible work, made possible by good connectivity, allows women to build technical careers without choosing between profession and family.

Access alone is not the whole answer. Visibility is the other half. Within our own organisation, I see talented women in our creative and technical teams, and I think it matters that girls watching from outside can see them there.

The more we can show Cambodian women already succeeding in technology, the more we replace the question 'can someone like me do this?' with 'where do I start?' That shift in mindset, multiplied across the country, is how a generation changes.

Digital Literacy and Online Safety

CLR: As Cambodia becomes more digitally connected, issues such as digital literacy, misinformation, and online safety are becoming increasingly important. How can businesses, schools, and communities better support women and young people in navigating the digital world safely and confidently?

As more Cambodians come online, the priority has to shift from access to confidence, and confidence comes from digital literacy. Rapid adoption has brought real risks alongside the opportunities. We see online scams, impersonation, and misinformation spreading quickly, and these often target the people who are newest to the digital world. Protecting them is a shared responsibility that no single business, school, or family can carry alone.

In our own work, we have seen first-hand how fraudsters impersonate trusted brands and institutions to deceive people, and how important it is to communicate clearly and quickly when that happens.

That experience taught me that companies cannot treat safety as something separate from their service. We have a duty to warn customers plainly, to make it easy to verify what is genuine, and to never assume people already know how to spot a fraud.

Schools have a parallel role: digital literacy deserves a place beside traditional subjects, so young people learn to question a source, protect their personal information, and recognise manipulation before they encounter it.

And communities and families create the safe space where someone can ask 'is this real?' without embarrassment.

For women and young people in particular, confidence online is built through honest conversation, not fear. The goal is not to make people afraid of technology, but to make them feel capable within it.

Leadership In Cambodia's Digital Infrastructure Sector

CLR: As CEO Cambodia at MekongNet, how do you approach leadership within a sector that is rapidly evolving alongside Cambodia's digital economy and connectivity needs?

Leading in this sector means accepting that the ground is always moving. The technology, the customer expectations, and the competitive landscape all change faster than any annual plan can anticipate.

So I try to lead less by fixed instruction and more by clear direction, making sure our teams understand where we are going and why, then trusting them with the freedom to find the best route there.

In a fast-moving market, the organisation that listens closest to its customers and its frontline staff usually adapts fastest.

I also believe infrastructure leadership carries a responsibility beyond commercial results. When you provide something people depend on every day, reliability and trust are not features. They are the foundation of the relationship.

A great deal of my focus is on the quality and consistency of what we deliver, and on responding honestly and quickly when something goes wrong, because trust is far harder to rebuild than it is to keep.

Internally, I lead teams across sales, marketing, and creative functions, and I have learned that developing people is the most durable investment a leader can make.

I promote from within, give capable people room to grow into bigger roles, and build a culture where mistakes are treated as learning rather than failure.

That is what allows an organisation to keep pace with a sector that never stands still. Technology evolves, but it is people, supported well, who carry it forward.

Advice For The Next Generation Of Women In Tech

CLR: What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are interested in building careers in technology, telecommunications, or digital leadership?

I started as a flower seller, I noted stock and sales, invoice, contact through a notebook and it become hard for me to look into information.

My customer come and asked me why don't I use computer, they have a better way to keep our data and we can find anything faster, then I go to learn computer, it was where this were all started. I did not wait for any of it I started with what I had and learned the rest while standing up.

So my advice about waiting is simple: the world will always give you a reason to postpone your own life, and most of those reasons are really someone else's fear, not yours.

Do not wait to feel qualified. Do not wait to be invited. Begin, and let the doing make you ready, it is the only way I have ever done anything. to start before you feel ready.

Many talented young women wait until they feel they have every qualification or every answer before they step forward, while others simply begin and learn along the way.

In a field that changes this quickly, the willingness to keep learning matters more than any single credential. Curiosity is your greatest asset, so protect it and use it.

Second, do not let anyone, including yourself, decide that technology is not a place for women. The industry needs your perspective precisely because you will see problems and opportunities that others miss. When you are the only woman in a meeting, treat it not as a reason to shrink, but as a reason to speak, and as a path you are helping to widen for the women who come after you.

Third, build your network and find people who will be honest with you. Seek mentors, support your peers, and when you reach a position of influence, reach back and lift others up. Careers in this sector are rarely built alone.

And finally, stay close to the real problems of Cambodian people. The most meaningful work in technology here is not about chasing what is fashionable elsewhere. It is about using these tools to genuinely improve lives in our own communities. Build for that, and your career will have both success and purpose.**CLR**



CHENDA THACH

FOUNDER - WOWEE ADVERTISING



As Founder of Wowee Advertising & Events and Urban Home KH, Chenda Thach has built a reputation as one of Cambodia's emerging entrepreneurs, successfully expanding across the events, marketing, and home furnishing sectors.

Her entrepreneurial journey has been shaped by resilience, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous learning. From building brands and managing high-profile events to launching a new venture serving Cambodia's growing property market, Chenda believes that long-term success is built on strong teams, trusted relationships, and a willingness to embrace change.

In this interview, Chenda reflects on the lessons she has learned as an entrepreneur, the evolution of Cambodia's events and marketing industry, emerging opportunities in the property and lifestyle sectors, the growing role of women in business, and her advice for the next generation of Cambodian founders.

Building Businesses Across Multiple Industries

CLR: You have successfully launched businesses in both the events and home furnishing sectors. What inspired your entrepreneurial journey, and what lessons have you learned from building companies across different industries?

My journey has been shaped by both my upbringing and ambition. Growing up, I watched my parents work incredibly hard to support the family. They ran small businesses and did whatever was necessary to make ends meet. It was not glamorous, and it certainly was not easy, but they showed me the value of resilience, determination, and believing that hard work can create opportunity.

There was a period when my mother became ill and was unable to work - at that time, my sister and I left school and entered the workforce. It was a challenging and uncertain time, but it reinforced the mindset I had already seen in my parents: when things become difficult, you focus on what needs to be done and keep moving forward.

While these experiences are not uncommon in Cambodia, they are what shaped me as a business owner. They taught me not to be afraid of hard work, uncertainty, or taking risks. I believe these are qualities that every entrepreneur must embrace. Looking back, those experiences played a significant role in shaping both my mindset and my entrepreneurial journey.

One of the biggest lessons I have learned is that no matter how hard you work as a founder, you cannot build a successful business alone. I learnt this the hard way when I lost a few key members a year into starting Wowee, I found myself almost building from scratch.

That experience forced me to think differently about leadership. It is not enough to hire good people and pay them every month. You need to understand what motivates them, what they want from their careers, and how you can help them grow.

Women in Entrepreneurship

CLR: More Cambodian women are starting businesses and pursuing leadership roles than ever before. From your experience as a founder, what opportunities and challenges do women entrepreneurs face in Cambodia today?

Historically, most business leaders and company owners have been men, which may have created challenges for women seeking leadership positions or access to business networks. People naturally gravitate towards mentoring and working with those who have backgrounds similar to their own.

That said, I was fortunate to have leaders who believed in me and trusted me with leadership opportunities, and in my experience success is usually determined by relationships and the ability to deliver results.

Today, I don't really see Cambodia as a male-versus-female business environment. We are seeing more women take on leadership roles across both the private and public sectors.

The launch of Urban Home KH came from a very practical experience. In government, leaders such as Chea Serey, Governor of the National Bank of Cambodia, and Cham Nimul, Minister of Commerce, are excellent examples. Their success is positive for Cambodia and reflects the growing contribution women are making to the country's future.

The Evolution of Cambodia's Events Industry

CLR: Since founding Wowee Advertising & Events in 2022, you have worked with some of Cambodia's leading brands. How have you seen the events, marketing, and brand activation industry evolve as Cambodia's private sector continues to grow?

One of the biggest changes I have seen in recent years has been the shift in how companies approach marketing and events. Following a strong growth period post covid, many brands became more active and ambitious with their marketing activities. More recently, however, the economic environment has led companies to become increasingly focused on budget efficiency and value.

Today, brands are taking a more measured approach to spending, with longer decision-making processes and greater scrutiny around where marketing dollars are allocated. There is a stronger focus on maximising budgets, ensuring activities align with business objectives, and achieving the best possible return on investment. This has encouraged agencies and service providers to be more strategic, accountable, and results-focused than ever before. However, the most noticeable change has been the increase in expectations around quality.

The benchmark is no longer simply what is considered good within Cambodia. Clients expect the same level of creativity, professionalism, and execution they would receive in Singapore or elsewhere in the region, and we take great pride in being able to deliver to that standard.

In fact, one of the most rewarding things in Wowee has been the opportunity to support local brands at events outside of Cambodia.

For us, that is a strong vote of confidence, not only in Wowee, but in the capability of Cambodian agencies more broadly.

When I first started in the industry, most corporate events relied almost exclusively on local performers and entertainment. Today, it is increasingly common for major brands to consider regional talent and international acts as part of their events and activations.

While this has created more competition, it has also had a very positive impact on the local industry. Cambodian performers and creatives have continued to raise their standards and become increasingly competitive at a regional level.

Opportunities in Cambodia's Property and Lifestyle Markets

CLR: With the launch of Urban Home KH, you have entered Cambodia's growing home furnishing and property services market.

What opportunities do you see emerging from Cambodia's urban development and changing consumer lifestyles?

As a property owner, I recently furnished my condominium unit and quickly realised that while furniture was available in Cambodia, finding the right furniture package was not easy.

I wanted furniture that was attractive, durable, and suitable for the type of tenants active in today's condominium market, particularly expatriates and international residents.

What I found was that many owners faced the same challenge.

They wanted a simple solution that would help their property stand out and achieve stronger rental returns, but sourcing and coordinating everything themselves could be time-consuming.

After completing my own unit, neighbours and other property owners started asking where I had sourced the furniture and whether I could help them do the same.

That experience showed me a growing opportunity within Cambodia's property and lifestyle sectors.

As more condominium developments are completed and urban living continues to evolve, demand is increasing for quality furnishing solutions that are affordable, modern and urban,

Urban Home KH grew organically from solving a real problem, and I believe that approach will continue to create opportunities as Cambodia's urban communities expand.

Advice for Future Women Founders

CLR: What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are interested in launching their own businesses and building successful brands in Cambodia?

My advice to young Cambodian women who want to start a business is to be confident enough to begin, but humble enough to ask for help. Like many entrepreneurs, I started largely on my own, and in the beginning I felt like I needed to solve every problem myself.

Looking back, one of the best decisions I made was surrounding myself with people who had already built successful businesses and were willing to share their experience. Mentors and strategic shareholders can contribute far more than just money (investment).

They can provide guidance, challenge your thinking, help you avoid mistakes, and open doors that may otherwise take years to unlock.

Looking back, the common theme across many of my biggest successes and challenges has been people. The right team can help a business grow beyond what you thought possible, and the right mentors can help you avoid mistakes that might otherwise take years to learn from.

For me, being a founder is not about building a business alone. It starts with having a strong idea, but the true success comes from having great people onboard, learning from them, and growing together.

Looking back, the quality of the people around me has had a greater impact on my success than any individual business idea. **CLR**



CHENDA KEO

GROUP CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER - FORTE GROUP



With more than 15 years of leadership experience across Cambodia's banking, financial services, and insurance sectors, Chenda Keo, Group Chief Human Resources Officer of Forte Group, leads the company's people strategy as a member of its Executive Committee. She has championed leadership development, organisational transformation, and the alignment of talent with long-term business growth.

A strong advocate for developing future leaders and advancing women in leadership, Chenda believes people are every organisation's greatest competitive advantage. She continues to promote talent development, succession planning, and inclusive leadership as key drivers of sustainable business success.

In this interview, Chenda reflects on building Cambodia's leadership pipeline, supporting women through financial protection and inclusion, strengthening female representation in executive leadership, managing regional growth, and her advice for the next generation of leaders.

Nurturing the Future: Building Cambodia's Insurance Talent Pipeline

CLR: As Group CHRO sitting on the Forte Exco, you balance sharp business goals with human development. Why is investing in leadership a deeply human and emotional imperative, rather than just a corporate cost?

I view leadership investment as both a business imperative and a human responsibility. Every strategy, transformation, or growth ambition succeeds or fails through its leaders.

They shape culture, drive performance, and influence how people experience the organization every day.

From the Forte Exco perspective, investing in leadership is not a cost—it's a multiplier of enterprise value. Strong leaders build high-performing teams, accelerate execution, strengthen succession, and retain top talent.

A great leader creates an environment where people feel trusted, valued, and inspired to do their best work.

That's why I believe leadership development is one of the most strategic investments an organisation can make—because when leaders grow, people thrive, and when people thrive, the business performs sustainably.

A Mission of Empathy: Women, Financial Literacy, and Community Protection

CLR: Women are the quiet economic anchors of most Cambodian households, yet many remain unprotected by insurance. How can the financial sector transition from selling products to truly protecting these women?

Women are among the most important drivers of household financial stability in Cambodia, yet many remain under protected. For the financial sector, the challenge is not simply increasing product penetration—it is closing the protection gap.

This requires a strategic shift from product distribution to outcome-driven protection: designing solutions that are accessible, affordable, and relevant to women's life journeys, while building trust through financial literacy, digital access, and inclusive distribution.

True protection begins with understanding women's realities—their aspirations, responsibilities, and the risks they face at different stages of life. Protecting women is not only a social imperative; it is a business and economic imperative. When women are financially resilient, families become more secure, communities become more stable, and economies grow stronger.

Culture Over Statistics: Intentional Advocacy for Women in Leadership

CLR: The financial sector has plenty of women at entry levels, but the boardroom remains heavily male-dominated. What has your personal journey through elite banking taught you about changing this reality?

Throughout my HR career in financial industry, I have been a passionate advocate for advancing women into executive and board leadership roles. One of the most important lessons I have learned is that talent is rarely the barrier—confidence, visibility, sponsorship, and access to opportunities often are.

While organisations have made significant progress in creating opportunities, the challenge today is encouraging more women to step forward and confidently pursue them.

At Forte, gender balance is a strategic priority championed by our Executive Committee. We are intentionally strengthening our female leadership pipeline through targeted development programs, leadership exposure, and succession planning to increase representation at executive and board levels.

I firmly believe that gender diversity is not just an inclusion agenda—it is a business imperative. Diverse leadership teams drive better decision-making, stronger governance, greater innovation, and more sustainable business performance.

Ultimately, progress requires a partnership. Organisations must open the doors, provide support, and create opportunities. Women must have the confidence and ambition to walk through those doors.

Bonding Together: Navigating the Human Soul of Regional Expansion

CLR: Forte Group has expanded beautifully beyond Cambodia into regional markets. Beyond the logistics, what does it feel like from a leadership perspective to manage the human realities of a cross-border expansion?

From a leadership perspective, cross-border expansion is ultimately not about entering new markets—it is about bringing people together around a shared vision while respecting different cultures, experiences, and ways of working.

As organisations grow regionally, the real challenge is balancing consistency with local relevance. You need a common culture, purpose, and set of values, while empowering local teams to lead in ways that resonate with their markets.

The human reality is that expansion creates both excitement and uncertainty. Leadership's role is to build trust, create a sense of belonging, and ensure people see opportunity rather than disruption.

For me, successful regional expansion is measured not only by market growth, but by our ability to build one connected organisation where people across borders feel valued, empowered, and united behind a common purpose.

The Vision Ahead: Legacy, Resilience, and My Blueprint for the Next Generation

CLR: Looking toward the next decade, what is your ultimate vision for Forte Group, and what personal advice do you give to young Cambodian women standing at the beginning of their careers?

My vision for Forte Group over the next decade is for it to become a leading regional organization recognized not only for business success, but also for developing exceptional talent, building trusted brands, and creating meaningful impact in the communities we serve.

Our success will be measured not only by growth, but also by our ability to empower people, foster innovation, and create opportunities for future generations.

To young Cambodian women starting their careers, I would say: believe in your potential and dare to dream bigger. Be ambitious, stay curious, and embrace every opportunity to learn. Don't wait until you feel confident to step forward—confidence is built through action, experience, and perseverance. Seek mentors, invest in your growth, and trust that your voice and ideas matter.

The future needs more women leaders who are willing to take risks, seize opportunities, and inspire others. Never let your background define your future or limit your ambitions. **CLR**



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DYPHAN PHIRUM

FOUNDER & CEO - MUCH MOBILE HEALTHCARE CO., LTD.



Dyphan is Founder and CEO of MUCH Mobile Healthcare, Cambodia's first dedicated home healthcare company. A registered nurse by profession, she transformed more than a decade of frontline healthcare experience into a mission to bring hospital-quality care directly into patients' homes, helping elderly people and families receive compassionate, professional care.

Passionate about healthy ageing, women in healthcare leadership, and social impact, Dyphan believes quality healthcare extends beyond hospitals and that every elderly person deserves to age with dignity, comfort, and respect. She is also committed to encouraging more healthcare professionals to become innovators and entrepreneurs.

In this interview she reflects on her journey from nurse to entrepreneur, the growing importance of home healthcare in Cambodia, building a culture of compassion, and empowering the next generation of women leaders to create positive change through healthcare.

From Nurse to Entrepreneur

CLR: You began your career as a registered nurse before founding MUCH Mobile Healthcare.

What inspired you to make the transition from healthcare professional to entrepreneur, and what motivated you to launch Cambodia's first dedicated home healthcare company?

I did not initially plan to become an entrepreneur. My passion was always caring for patients as a nurse.

After more than 10 years of working as a nurse in both public and private healthcare sectors, I witnessed many patients and families struggling after leaving the hospital.

Elderly patients, people with chronic illnesses, and those requiring long-term care often needed continued professional support, yet professional home healthcare services were very limited in Cambodia at that time.

My personal life also influenced me. When my father was ill, I saw how difficult it was for my family, especially my mother, to balance caregiving responsibilities with work and family life. That experience stayed with me deeply.

It helped me understand that care is not only a medical need, but also an emotional, social, and family responsibility.

At the beginning, I had no business knowledge and very limited financial resources. My turning point came in 2015, when I joined an entrepreneurship training program and was mentored by a woman who believed in my idea. She encouraged me to transform my nursing experience into a sustainable business model.

With determination and continuous learning, I founded MUCH Mobile Healthcare in 2016, the first company in Cambodia to provide professional home healthcare services.

My inspiration comes from a deep belief that elderly people deserve to age with dignity, comfort, and belonging, and that healthcare should reach them wherever they are.

Many senior people in Cambodia lived through the civil war and the Pol Pot genocidal regime, carrying lifelong pain, sacrifice, and resilience including my own parents. They spent their younger years working hard to rebuild the country and raise their children.

Today, as Cambodia enjoys peace and development, many are entering the final chapter of life without the level of care, comfort, and attention they truly deserve. Even when families love them deeply, many elderly people can feel left behind as their children are busy building careers and supporting their own families.

I founded MUCH with a simple vision: to bring hospital-quality care into people's homes, so patients can receive professional care while remaining close to their families in a familiar and comfortable environment. What started as a healthcare service has become a mission to improve the quality of life for elderly people and families across Cambodia.

I believe nurses like me can create real change by combining clinical skills, compassion, and innovation. Through MUCH, my mission is to bring comfort, dignity, and professional care to elderly people and families, honoring a generation that worked tirelessly, sacrificed greatly, and laid the foundation for the lives we enjoy today.

Cambodia's Ageing Population and Healthcare Needs

CLR: As Cambodia continues to develop, healthcare needs are becoming more diverse, particularly for elderly and long-term care. How important is home healthcare in helping families provide dignity, comfort, and quality care for ageing loved ones?

I believe one of the greatest challenges and opportunities facing Cambodia is how we care for our ageing population. Elderly people do not only need medical treatment; they need dignity, companionship, purpose, and support to age well. Home healthcare is becoming one of the most important healthcare services for Cambodia's future.

Many elderly people wish to remain in their own homes, surrounded by familiar faces, memories, and the people they love. Home healthcare allows them to receive professional medical and nursing care while maintaining their dignity, comfort, and independence.

As a nurse, I have seen that caring for an elderly loved one can be physically, emotionally, and financially challenging for families. Even when family members love their parents deeply, they often struggle to balance caregiving with work and other responsibilities. Professional home healthcare helps families share that responsibility and gives them peace of mind.

Many senior people in Cambodia lived through war, hardship, and sacrifice. They worked hard to raise their children and rebuild the country. I believe they deserve not only medical care, but also dignity, respect, companionship, and a sense of belonging in their later years. That is what motivates me every day.

Women in Healthcare Leadership

CLR: Healthcare is a sector where many frontline workers are women, yet leadership and entrepreneurship opportunities can still be challenging. What has your experience been as a female founder, and how can more women be encouraged to pursue leadership roles within healthcare?

As Cambodia's elderly population grows, we need more women leaders who can develop innovative solutions for healthy ageing, caregiving, and long-term care.

I started my journey as a nurse, not as a businessperson. When I founded MUCH Mobile Healthcare, I had limited business knowledge, limited financial resources, and many people questioned whether a nurse could successfully build and lead a healthcare company.

Along the way, I learned that leadership is not about having all the answers. It is about having the courage to learn, adapt, and continue moving forward even when things are difficult.

I believe women bring unique strengths to leadership, including empathy, resilience, collaboration, and the ability to build trust. These qualities are especially valuable in healthcare.

To encourage more women to pursue leadership roles, we need more access to education, mentorship, networks, and opportunities. Most importantly, we need more visible role models. When young women see other women leading organizations, creating businesses, and making decisions, they begin to believe that they can do the same.

I hope my journey can encourage more nurses and healthcare professionals to see themselves not only as caregivers, but also as innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders.

Building a Culture of Care and Service

CLR: MUCH Mobile Healthcare has grown into an award-winning company focused on care, compassion, and professionalism. How do you build a team culture that balances business growth with the human side of healthcare?



At MUCH, we always remind ourselves that every patient is someone's mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, spouse, or loved one. Behind every medical condition is a human story. Beyond that we also remind our team that every elderly patient carries a lifetime of experiences, sacrifices, and contributions to society. We are not simply providing healthcare; we are honoring a generation.

While clinical skills and professionalism are essential, compassion and empathy are equally important. We encourage our team to treat patients the way they would want their own family members to be treated.

As a leader, I believe that business growth should never come at the expense of humanity. Sustainable growth happens when employees feel valued, patients feel respected, and families trust the care we provide.

We invest in training, mentorship, and professional development, but we also invest in values. Our goal is not only to build a successful healthcare company, but to create a culture where people genuinely care for one another.



Empowering the Next Generation

CLR: You are passionate about empowering women, inspiring youth, and serving vulnerable communities. What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who aspire to build careers in healthcare, entrepreneurship, or social impact leadership?

My advice is simple: do not wait until you feel completely ready. When I started MUCH, I did not have all the answers. I did not have extensive business experience or significant financial resources. What I had was a purpose and a willingness to learn.

Many young women underestimate their own potential. They wait for the perfect opportunity, the perfect plan, or the perfect moment. In reality, growth happens when we take the first step, even when we feel uncertain.

I encourage young women to continue learning, seek mentors, build strong networks, and believe in the value they can bring to society. Do not be afraid of challenges; they are often our greatest teachers. Most importantly, stay connected to your purpose. Success is not only measured by titles or financial achievements. True success comes from creating positive change and improving the lives of others. If you lead with purpose, compassion, and integrity, your impact can reach far beyond what you imagine.

I hope more young people will see elderly care not as a burden, but as one of the most important opportunities to create social impact in Cambodia. As our population ages, we need compassionate leaders, healthcare professionals, and innovators who are willing to serve this growing community. **CLR**

FRANDARA KHUON

CEO - TRUEMONEY CAMBODIA, MYANMAR & MALAYSIA CLUSTER



In this interview, Frandara reflects on the evolution of women's leadership in finance, Cambodia's digital payments transformation, the role of fintech in supporting financial inclusion and SME growth,.

Women in Cambodia's Banking and Finance Sector

CLR: Having built a long career across both Australia and Cambodia, and as one of the few senior women leaders within Cambodia's banking and financial services sector, how have you seen opportunities for women in finance evolve over the years?

When I started, finance in both Australia and Cambodia was largely a man's world, and women rarely sat where strategy and risk decisions were made. That has shifted meaningfully. Today, women lead credit teams, run operations, hold executive positions, and found fintech ventures of their own.

The change is no longer driven only by goodwill. Institutions now understand that diverse leadership produces better decisions for a customer base that is at least half women.

I will not pretend the journey is complete. Representation still thins toward the top, but the direction is clear. For me, leadership has always carried a purpose beyond title: to widen the path so the women coming after me reach senior roles faster than I did.

As Chief Executive Officer of TrueMoney Cambodia, Myanmar & Malaysia Cluster, Frandara (Dara) Khuon is helping lead one of Southeast Asia's fastest-growing digital financial services businesses. She has built extensive experience across banking, financial services, and fintech, while championing digital innovation as a driver of financial inclusion.

Working at the forefront of Cambodia's digital payments revolution, Dara has witnessed firsthand the country's rapid transformation into one of the region's most dynamic digital finance markets. Through her leadership, she continues to focus on expanding access to secure, convenient financial services while supporting underserved communities, women entrepreneurs, and small businesses.

As one of the few women leading a major fintech business in Cambodia, she is also passionate about creating more opportunities for women to pursue careers in banking, technology, and corporate leadership.

Cambodia's Digital Payments Transformation

CLR: Cambodia has experienced rapid growth in digital payments and mobile financial services in recent years.

What do you believe has been driving this transformation, and how is it changing consumer behaviour across the country?

Cambodia's digital payments leap has been remarkable, and I see three forces behind it.

First, demographics—a young, mobile-first population that adopted smartphones before bank branches, meaning that for many, their first financial account was a digital wallet.

Second, infrastructure and policy. The National Bank of Cambodia's work, particularly through Bakong, has created interoperability and strengthened public trust in digital payments.

Third, genuine everyday utility. Whether it is sending money home, paying at a local market, or settling a bill without travelling, behaviour changes when a service genuinely makes daily life easier.

The deeper impact is social. People who were once excluded by distance or cost are now financially connected. Consumers increasingly expect financial services to be instant, always available, and accessible from the palm of their hand, and those expectations are reshaping the entire financial sector.

Supporting Women and SME Growth

CLR: Digital financial platforms are increasingly helping SMEs and entrepreneurs access faster and more convenient financial services. How important is digital finance in supporting women-led businesses and improving financial inclusion in Cambodia?





Digital finance is essential for improving financial inclusion and supporting women-led businesses in Cambodia.

At TrueMoney Cambodia, our women agents are a great example of this impact. They run their own businesses while providing financial services to people in their communities, helping expand access to the digital economy.

By empowering women agents, we are not only creating income opportunities for women but also strengthening local communities and supporting economic growth. As a female leader, I believe that when women have access to financial tools and opportunities, they can drive meaningful change for their families, businesses, and society.

Leadership in a Fast-Changing Financial Sector

CLR: As CEO of the TrueMoney Cambodia, Myanmar & Malaysia Cluster, how do you approach leadership and decision-making within a financial industry that continues to evolve so quickly through technology and innovation?

Leading across the region means accepting that technology, regulation, and customer expectations all move faster than any annual plan.

My approach rests on a few principles. First, anchor decisions in what does not change—trust, security, and genuine customer value. Technology is the means, never the goal.

Second, decide with discipline but without paralysis, because in a fast-moving market, waiting for perfect information is itself a costly decision.



Third, build a team that can think independently. I set a clear direction, create space for honest challenge, and trust people to act.

I also lead with intent. When we choose what to build, I ask whether it expands access for those still on the margins. Purpose keeps a fast-moving organisation grounded.

Advice for Future Women Leaders in Finance and Fintech

CLR: What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are hoping to build careers in banking, fintech, or digital leadership roles in the future?

First, build real expertise—in risk, technology, operations, or customer experience. Genuine depth of knowledge is something no one can take from you, and it earns you a seat at the table.

Second, do not wait to feel fully ready. Many capable women hold back until they meet every criterion. Take the stretch role, ask for the project, and put yourself forward—growth happens just outside your comfort zone.

Third, find mentors and sponsors, and become one in return.

Let me say plainly to young Cambodian women: this industry needs you. Fintech in Cambodia is still being built, which means there is room to shape it. Your perspective is not a disadvantage to overcome—it is exactly what the future of inclusive finance in Cambodia requires. **CLR**

"Your perspective is not a disadvantage to overcome—it is exactly what the future of inclusive finance in Cambodia requires."
Frاندara Khoun, CEO, TrueMoney Cambodia, Myanmar & Malaysia Cluster.



KINKESA KIM

MANAGING DIRECTOR - APS CAMBODIA



As Managing Director of APS Cambodia, Kinkesa Kim leads one of Cambodia's leading real estate advisory firms, helping investors, developers, occupiers, and financial institutions navigate an increasingly sophisticated property market. Having built her career in research, consulting, and advisory, she has played a significant role in shaping market intelligence and strategic decision-making across Cambodia's real estate sector.

With more than a decade of experience, Kinkesa has witnessed the industry's transformation from a rapidly emerging market to one placing greater emphasis on transparency, professionalism, and long-term sustainability. Today, she continues to champion higher industry standards through research, data-driven advisory services, and professional development, while working closely with both local and international investors.

As one of the few women leading a major real estate advisory business in Cambodia, she is passionate about creating greater opportunities for women across the property sector.

She believes the industry's future will be defined not only by investment and development, but also by stronger governance, better market information, and a commitment to building trust.

In this interview, Kinkesa reflects on the evolving role of women in Cambodia's real estate industry, the importance of professional standards and market transparency, leading through changing market conditions, and her advice for the next generation of women pursuing careers in property and real estate.

Women in Cambodia's Real Estate Sector

CLR: Cambodia's real estate industry has traditionally been seen as a male-dominated sector. From your perspective, how has the role of women within the industry evolved in recent years?

From my observation, at the participation level, the number of men and women in Cambodia's real estate sector is becoming more balanced in general. However, there is a more visible gap at the leadership level, where senior decision-making roles are still largely held by men.

But our market is becoming more professional and more knowledge driven. This creates more room for women who bring technical expertise, experience, attention to detail and strong interpersonal skills to lean in.

I hope to see more women given equal opportunity to be responsible, make decisions, lead teams and make more meaningful contribution in shaping the industry standards.

I believe the next step is to move from women's participation to influence.

Formalising Cambodia's Real Estate Industry

CLR: As the sector continues to mature, how important is it for Cambodia's real estate industry to become more formalised in areas such as professional standards, licensing, transparency, and ethics?

Today, we have proper licensing for agents, valuers, property managers, and developers; and clearer property ownership structures.

These are the foundations for building trust and formalizing the industry. However, we still need stronger enforcement and more consistency in professional practices.

The first full real estate market cycle in the last 15 years has taught our young market that real estate is not only about buying, selling, or renting.

It can significantly affects people's wealth, livelihoods, business operations, financial system, and long-term investment confidence.

Having a formalised industry may mean the market will grow not as quickly but it protects the consumers, strengthens investor confidence, and creates a sustainable market for everyone.

Building Trust Through Transparency

CLR: Trust and reliable market information are becoming increasingly important for buyers, investors, and developers. How can the industry improve transparency around property data, pricing, and agent professionalism?

Transparency is not just about publishing a price. It is about clearly explaining what the price includes and excludes.



For example, in office leasing, a tenant should not decide based only on headline rent. They need to understand service charges, incentives, handover conditions, commercial terms, and included services and amenities. Without that context, a “cheaper” option may actually be more expensive than a “premium” option.

Cambodia may not yet have the same depth of public transaction data as more mature markets, so every stakeholder has a role to play. Regulators, business chambers, professional associations, banks, developers, and real estate agencies can all contribute through education, clearer disclosure, market dialogue, and better professional standards.

At APS Cambodia, we try to contribute by training our agents to advise based on data, not just optimistic marketing.



We look at market indicators such as supply, pricing, occupancy, and demand trends and we share these insights through our quarterly Market Pulse, annual Fearless Forecast, private client briefings, forums, and in industry discussions both locally and internationally. The goal is simple: better information should lead to better decisions.

Leading Through Market Challenges

CLR: Cambodia’s property sector has experienced both rapid growth and more challenging market conditions in recent years. How do you approach leadership and decision-making during periods of industry transition?

In a growth market, business leadership is often about grabbing and optimizing opportunities. In a transition market like now, leaders need to create their own opportunities through clarity, agility and discipline.

For me, clarity means knowing what matters most and aligning the team around common goals. Agility means making decisions with the information available, taking action, reviewing the outcome, and adjusting quickly when conditions change.

At the same time, we cannot neglect the business foundations. We have to protect cash flow, maintain service quality, continue developing our people and strengthening client relationships.

A transition market is challenging, but it is also the time when companies build the foundation for the next cycle.

Advice for Future Women Leaders in Real Estate

CLR: What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are interested in building careers in real estate, property advisory, or entrepreneurship?

A valuable perspective I gained from Sheryl Sandberg's book *Lean In* is the idea of "sitting at the table".

I'd encourage young Cambodian women to take initiative, raise their hands, and take visible roles without waiting to be invited or given permission.

And while confidence is important, competence must come first. So, keep learning about the market, understanding the numbers, asking questions, and learning how to communicate clearly.

The more competent you are, the easier it is for people to see you beyond your gender and age. Real estate offers many paths.

Beyond sales and leasing, women can build meaningful careers in research, valuation, property management, investment, development, architecture and engineering, finance, and marketing. There is room for many different strengths.

Finally, I would also encourage them to have a strong network of mentors, not just one. Leadership and entrepreneurship require technical skills, judgment, soft skills, and resilience.

A good mentor network is like a personal board of advisors who can guide you through different stages of your journey. **CLR**



LYNDA HIM

CEO - PRIMALIS CORPORATION



With an international career spanning Cambodia, Singapore, and Africa, Him Lynda, Chief Executive Officer of Primalis Corporation and Vice Chairwoman of the Cambodia Rice Federation, is helping strengthen Cambodia's position as a leading exporter of premium rice. She leads one of the Kingdom's largest rice milling and export companies while supporting the long-term competitiveness of Cambodia's agricultural sector.

Passionate about promoting Cambodian rice to global markets, Lynda believes the future of agriculture lies in quality, value-added production, innovation, and stronger international branding. She is also a strong advocate for increasing women's leadership across agribusiness and international trade.

In this interview, Lynda reflects on women in agriculture, building the 'Brand Cambodia' story, creating greater value through exports, leading in a competitive global market, and inspiring the next generation of Cambodian women leaders.

Women in Cambodia's Agriculture Sector

Agriculture remains one of Cambodia's most important industries, with women playing a major role throughout the value chain. How have you seen the role of women in agriculture and agribusiness evolve over the years?

When I started in this industry over a decade ago, women were largely under represented in agribusiness leadership. They were present everywhere in the fields, planting, harvesting, sorting, but rarely at the boardroom table, rarely in export negotiations, rarely setting the strategy. That has changed, and the change is real.

Today, I see women running cooperatives, leading processing facilities, negotiating directly with international buyers. The shift is partly generational, younger Cambodian women are better educated, more confident, and less willing to accept a ceiling that was never justified to begin with. But it is also structural: programs supporting women farmers, access to microfinance, and initiatives within the Cambodia Rice Federation have opened doors that were previously closed.

What has not changed enough is representation at the highest levels of decision-making. We still have too few women shaping national agricultural policy, leading the largest exporters, or sitting on the boards of industry associations. I am conscious that my role carries a certain visibility, and I take that responsibility seriously.

It is not enough to succeed quietly, the point is to make the path more visible for those who come after.

Agriculture in Cambodia is not a traditional industry waiting to modernize. It is a strategic sector with global ambition. And that ambition will only be realized if we draw on the full depth of our talent, which means women, fully and unapologetically, at every level of the value chain.

Building the 'Brand Cambodia' Story.

Cambodian rice has gained international recognition for its quality and has become one of the country's flagship exports. How important is it to continue building the 'Brand Cambodia' story in global markets, and what opportunities do you see ahead?



The recognition is the result of years of investment in quality standards, export infrastructure, and deliberate brand-building by exporters and the Federation.

However a reputation is fragile, and we need to continue to improve the Cambodian Rice Brand. 'Brand Cambodia' must be continuously improved, through consistent quality, through traceability that importing countries increasingly demand, and through storytelling that connects the product to its origin in a way that resonates with conscious consumers globally.

The opportunity ahead is significant. As middle classes grow across Asia, Europe, and the Gulf Countries, the appetite for premium, origin-specific food products grow with them.

Cambodia can position its rice the way France positions its wines or Japan its beef or fish.

They are not just commodity, but an experience with a story and a terroir behind it.

What this requires is coordination: between government, exporters, farmers, and institutions like the Federation. And it requires patience, for brand equity to be built over the years.

Primalis has made this, a strategic priority, with investments in high efficient technology capacity to produce premium quality products for our customers around the globe.

Primalis is certified for food safety standards including FDA, HACCP, ISO 22000, HALAL, BRC, GMP. The factory features extensive warehouse facilities for loading, storing and connectivity.

Primalis has also collaborated with strong international providers like Buhler, Satake, Maersk or anchor institutions such as the Agricultural and Rural Development Bank of Cambodia.

We are not simply selling rice. We are representing Cambodia's agricultural identity in global markets, and we treat that as both a commercial and a national responsibility.

Adding Value to Cambodian Agriculture

As Cambodia seeks to move beyond exporting raw commodities, how important is value-added processing, branding, and product development in strengthening the country's agricultural sector?

Exporting raw paddy is the least rewarding position in the value chain. Farmers work, land produce but the majority of the margin is captured somewhere else, in the milling, the branding, the distribution, the retail shelf abroad. Cambodia has been comfortable with this, for too long.

Value-added processing is now an economic imperative. Every kilogram of rice that leaves Cambodia as a finished, milled, packaged, and branded product rather than raw commodity represents a multiple in revenue, more jobs, and a stronger signal to global buyers that Cambodia is a serious, reliable supplier.

At Primalis, we have invested in quality and efficient milling capacity, in quality control at every stage, and in developing product formats that match the requirements of international buyers.

he broader challenge is scaling this mindset across the sector. This is where policy support matters. We need more incentives for investment, access to financing, and technical assistance for small cooperatives to meet the quality thresholds that premium markets require. Cambodia has raw material.

What we need now is the capability to convert raw material into lasting economic value, for farmers, businesses, and for the country's long-term trade position.

Leading in a Global Export Industry

As CEO of one of Cambodia's largest rice exporters and Vice Chairwoman of the Cambodia Rice Federation, how do you approach leadership in an industry that must balance farmers' interests, international competitiveness, and long-term sustainability?



Leadership in this industry requires several key aspects.

Farmers are the foundation. Without them, there is no rice, no export industry, no Federation, no Primalis. Every decision we make at the commercial level has consequences that travel back down the chain to the smallholder who planted in the hope of a fair return. It is a daily reality that shapes how we think about pricing, about purchase commitments, and about the relationships we build with farming communities. International competitiveness is key.

Our buyers in Europe, China, and the Middle East have options. They source elsewhere when Cambodia cannot deliver on quality, consistency, and reliability. Sentiment does not win tenders, performance does. So the discipline of running a commercially rigorous operation is critical to continue uplifting our farmers for the long term.

Sustainability is no longer a differentiator but a baseline requirement. Environmental standards, carbon footprint, water usage, chemical inputs, are questions our buyers ask, and the regulatory environment will only tighten. We must get ahead, not just catch up.

My approach to leadership has always been to be direct, to stay close to the operational reality, and to build teams that challenge me. The complexity of this industry demands honest feedbacks of what is working, what is not, and where we need to invest to remain competitive.

Inspiring the Next Generation of Women

Leaders

What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are interested in building careers in agriculture, agribusiness, international trade, or industry leadership?



Go for it! In my view, industries such as agriculture, trade, finance, technology do not have a lot of space for women unless women create it themselves.

Work Hard and Work Smart. To build credibility in male dominated industries, it is very important to be confident in our own expertise, knowledge and strengths. We have to work twice as hard but so be it, let's do it. We cannot wait for perfect moments.

Mentorship. I was fortunate to have role models early in my career at Airbus, and then in my family business. I could learn and show what I was capable to do. It enabled me to believe in my potential through failures and successes. Today, I train younger Cambodian women in my teams, provide them opportunities to travel with me to trade shows, conferences, seminars and join high level negotiations with international customers or partners.

Women from the province demonstrate even stronger mindset and eagerness to learn fast.

Purpose and ambition. I believe it is important to know why you are working hard and fighting to change the status quo. Whether we are building for ourselves, our families, our children, or our parents, we have to always remind ourselves that women carry a lot of responsibilities.

Cambodia's agricultural sector has a genuine role to play in the nation's development and in feeding populations around the world.

The next generation of Cambodian women leaders will operate in a more connected, more competitive, and I hope more equitable world. What I want to pass on, is a world class brand, structure, culture, model build from Cambodia, in Cambodia that is creating world class value recognized globally. We come from very far, but we are only at the beginning of the Cambodian Rice story. **CLR**





ROSEWOOD

PHNOM PENH

MAR AMARA

SENIOR GROUP CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER - ACLEDA BANK PLC.



As Senior Group Chief Financial Officer of ACLEDA Bank Plc., Ms. Mar Amara has spent more than three decades at the forefront of Cambodia's financial sector, witnessing its transformation from the country's early microfinance movement to one of Southeast Asia's most dynamic banking industries.

Today, Mar Amara serves on the Bank's Executive Committee and chairs several of its key governance bodies, including the Assets and Liabilities Committee, Investment Committee, Subsidiaries Support Committee, and Basel Team.

In this interview, Mar Amara reflects on the changing role of women in Cambodia's banking sector, the importance of financial inclusion in supporting long-term economic growth, leadership in an increasingly digital financial environment, building trust and resilience within the banking industry, and her advice for the next generation of Cambodian women pursuing careers in finance and corporate leadership.

Women in Cambodia's Banking Sector

CLR: Cambodia's banking sector has grown rapidly over the past decade alongside the country's economic development. From your perspective, how has the role of women in banking and financial leadership evolved during this period?

Thank you for this profoundly important question, which allows me to reflect on my personal journey and the broader, remarkable transformation of our nation's financial landscape. To provide some context, my journey in the public and private sectors began back in October 1986 at the Ministry of Planning, where I served for over six years before joining ACLEDA on June 1, 1993. When I first joined, ACLEDA was an NGO dedicated to supporting micro and small enterprises, and I began my tenure as a junior accountant.

Over my career spanning nearly four decades, I have witnessed a profound and systemic evolution in the role of women in our sector. We are seeing a distinct transition from accounting and administrative support roles to robust executive leadership. Women are now actively driving strategic growth, managing vast financial portfolios, and leading executive committees. In my own experience, I have ascended to serve as the Senior Group Chief Financial Officer, directly chairing the Assets and Liabilities Committee (ALCO), the Investment Committee, the Subsidiaries Support Committee, and the Bank's Basel Team, taking comprehensive responsibility for the Finance Division and Budgeting & Control.

This evolution has fundamentally shattered the outdated "male-dominated" paradigm that previously defined complex financial risk management. We now universally understand that active listening, strategic empathy, diversities, and relational intelligence are the absolute cornerstones of high-performance management leadership. This progress relies heavily on an organizational culture of meritocracy, good corporate governance, and a strict zero-tolerance policy for prejudice.

At ACLEDA, advancement is strictly based on 21st-century skills, outstanding performance, and an unwavering commitment to holistic excellence—balancing technical and professional competencies, behavioral and personal competencies, soft skills, moralities and ethics, and overall well-being.

Furthermore, this remarkable progress and evolution are significantly supported by the favorable macroeconomic and social ecosystems cultivated and significantly supported by the Royal Government of Cambodia, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC), the Securities and Exchange Regulator of Cambodia (SERC), and other relevant stakeholders and players.

Their collective commitment to advancing women's rights and empowerment has been instrumental in fostering inclusive participation. Finally, modern female banking leaders typically embrace and are fully committed to continuous education, professional development, and lifelong learning.

Reflecting this standard, my own journey includes completing the Green Bond and Sustainable Finance Executive program in Stockholm in October 2022; the Organizational Leadership Program at Harvard Business School in August 2022; the AICD's International Company Directors Course in 2018, leading to my designation as a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD) since 2018; FMO's professional training programs on asset-liability management and the Future of Banking Academy, held in Amsterdam in 2008 and 2014; and consecutive educational programs on financial and security markets organized by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) from 2007 to 2008.

Financial Inclusion and Economic Growth

CLR: Financial inclusion remains an important part of Cambodia's long-term economic development. How important is the banking sector in creating greater financial opportunities for Cambodian families, entrepreneurs, and women-led businesses?

Financial inclusion is a subject that remains profoundly close to my heart. It is not merely a peripheral corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative; rather, it is the historical DNA and the very heartbeat of our organization. Since its establishment in January 1993, ACLEDA Bank has been actively and enormously contributing alongside the Royal Government of Cambodia, as well as governments in the region, to socio-economic development and poverty reduction.

Our unwavering commitment is to continuously elevate the living standards, prosperity, and quality of life for our employees, customers, stakeholders, and the people of Cambodia and the wider region.

By actively supporting the government's development plans, strategies, and policies, we have built a robust framework for financial empowerment. The banking sector plays a critical and transformative role because it acts as the primary engine driving equitable opportunities and sustainable wealth creation. At the foundational level, formal banking acts as a direct catalyst for household resilience.

Providing access to secure savings, affordable credit, and professional financial tools equips vulnerable populations with the necessary resources to systematically elevate their socio-economic status. It means a mother in a remote province can safely save money, successfully manage and withstand unexpected economic shocks, and warmly invest in fundamental needs like her children's education and healthcare.

Furthermore, the banking sector serves as a vital supplier of capital for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which are the indispensable economic backbone of Cambodia. We achieve this particularly by providing micro, small, and medium entrepreneurs, as well as the general public, with highly efficient banking and financial products, services, and mechanisms to manage and allocate their financial resources.

These offerings are continuously innovated and diversified to ensure high quality, safety and security, broad financial inclusion, and maximum efficiency. Within this framework, we have placed a special focus on women-led businesses, supported by extensive partnerships with international organizations like the IFC. We must formally recognize the incredible "socio-economic multiplier effect" here: statistically, when the banking sector financially empowers a woman, she reinvests her income back into her family's health and education, creating a powerful ripple effect that drives broad-based community development and gender equality.



In the era of the 4th and 5th Industrial Revolutions (4IR/5IR), digital transformation has vastly expanded the scope of financial inclusion. Digital leapfrogging allows us to seamlessly reach rural populations who previously lacked access to banking services, offering them competitive pricing and high security through modern digital banking tools. All of these initiatives and activities aim to uplift livelihoods with sustainability and maximize the benefits for all of our customers, communities, employees, and stakeholders. These efforts are accomplished by strictly and consistently adhering to the highest professional ethics, social, legal, and environmental principles—directly fulfilling our organizational Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) commitments.

Ultimately, by driving financial inclusion, the banking sector develops comprehensive and inclusive human capital for the entire nation. It ensures that every citizen can continue to cultivate academic excellence, essential soft skills, moral character, and physical and mental well-being. This holistic development guarantees that our long-term economic growth remains genuinely resilient, inclusive, and truly prosperous.

Leadership in a Changing Financial Environment

CLR: Cambodia's banking sector is continuing to adapt to changing economic conditions, digitalisation, and rising customer expectations. As a financial leader, how do you approach decision-making and leadership in such a fast-changing environment?

The incredible speed of change today is something that even ten years ago I would not have easily predicted. In today's era, prominently defined by the 4th and 5th Industrial Revolutions, the rapid advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the burgeoning digital/AI-driven economy, the financial landscape is characterized by unprecedented volatility, speed, and complexity.

To effectively lead and make confident strategic decisions in such a dynamic environment, my approach is grounded in a rigorous blend of steadfast core principles, continuous adaptation, collective intelligence, and a deeply held philosophy of continuous education, continuing professional development, and lifelong learning.

My approach to sophisticated decision-making relies primarily on several critical frameworks.

First, I heavily utilize the "Double Helix of Leadership," specifically adhering to the "Leader as Beacon, Architect, and Catalyst" framework, which I studied extensively through the Organizational Leadership Program at Harvard Business School. A financial leader must purposefully act as a "Beacon" setting clear direction, an "Architect" meticulously designing agile systems and infrastructures to deliver value, and a "Catalyst" actively driving much-needed change and innovation.

Second, I am deeply guided by a profound foundational framework consistently emphasized by our President and Group Managing Director, Dr. In Channy: "Right Listening, Right Thinking, Right Doing, Right Decision-Making."

Third, effective leadership in uncertainty is never a solitary endeavor; I rely heavily on fostering synergy and collective intelligence. Outstanding leadership is about actively building a team that you deeply trust, soliciting ground-level inputs, and fostering robust open debate. We absolutely cannot afford to forget empathy and emotional intelligence.

While leveraging advanced data analytics, leadership must proudly remain human-centric, carefully understanding the dispositions of our people to maintain unbreakable mutual trust. Finally, I forcefully maintain a relentless commitment to continuous education, continuing professional development, lifelong learning. and a robust "Growth Mindset," allowing us to correct our strategic course confidently when needed, rather than waiting paralyzed for perfect information.



Building Trust and Long-Term Stability

CLR: The banking sector plays a critical role in maintaining confidence and supporting long-term economic stability. What do you believe are the most important qualities needed to build trust and resilience within Cambodia's financial sector today?

Trust is the absolute, non-negotiable cornerstone of the banking and financial sector; it is the ultimate currency upon which our entire macroeconomic stability and Cambodia's socio-economic development rest. Without an unshakeable foundation of trust, an organization simply has nothing. Maintaining the unwavering trust and confidence of the general public, domestic and foreign investors, national regulators, and all stakeholders requires financial institutions to operate with unimpeachable integrity, robust strategic foresight, and a permanent commitment to operational excellence. At ACLEDA Bank, this is not merely a theoretical concept; it is the living reflection of our well-established image, our core identity, and our deeply held guiding slogan: "The bank you can trust, the bank for the people" (ប្រជាធនាគារដែលលោកអ្នកជឿទុកចិត្ត) .

To systematically cultivate and ensure this vital trust across our operations, we actively embrace and effectively implement a universally respected mental model known as "The Trust Equation" (developed by David Maister, Charles Green, and Robert Galford). We believe that trust is not merely an abstract feeling or a marketing catchphrase; it is a dynamic, measurable asset that must be strategically managed, rightly implemented, and flawlessly executed at every level of our organization to ensure long-term resilience and stability.

To ensure the reader fully understands this powerful concept, the Trust Equation posits that trustworthiness is calculated by adding Credibility, Reliability, and Intimacy, and then dividing that sum by Self-Orientation [Trust = (Credibility + Reliability + Intimacy) / Self-Orientation]. For a bank, Credibility means possessing unquestionable financial soundness and technical expertise. Reliability is demonstrated through decisive governance, flawless compliance, and consistently delivering on our promises. Intimacy requires relational leadership—building psychological safety, transparency, and empathetic connections with our customers, colleagues, employees, partners, and stakeholders.

Crucially, to maximize trust, a leader and an organization must fiercely minimize the denominator: Self-Orientation. If an organization is perceived as selfish or solely focused on short-term profits, trust is instantly destroyed. By keeping our self-orientation exceptionally low and our dedication to the community high, we build an unshakeable bond with the public.

Building upon this equation, successfully sustaining this vital trust and structural resilience within Cambodia's maturing financial sector rests firmly on several highly integrated pillars. These pillars constitute the best practices and lessons learned from ACLEDA's sustainable growth and success—insights we proudly share with other Banking and Financial Institutions (BFIs) to ensure nationwide financial stability, inclusive growth, and sustainable development. First and foremost is the paramount adherence to the organization's Mission, Vision, and Core Values, which must act as the "Pole Star/North Star/Mantra" (ត្រីវិស័យ/មន្ត្រ/មន្ត្រ).

In a rapidly changing world, an organization must never lose sight of its foundational purpose. Our vision is to be Cambodia's leading and most trusted commercial bank, serving all segments of the community. Our mission is to provide customers with secured and innovative products to manage their financial resources efficiently, while observing the highest principles of ethical behavior, respecting society, the law, and the environment. **To anchor this mission, we strictly adhere to our Core Values, clearly defined by the very letters of our name in Khmer and English, ACLEDA (អេស៊ីលីដា):**

-អ-A: អភិសមាចារ (Affinity and Empathy)—We focus on conducting ourselves in a satisfying and transparent manner toward all stakeholders, including employees, customers, business partners, and the general public.

-ស-C: សុចរិតភាព ស្មោះត្រង់ (Customer Experience with Integrity and Loyalty)—We focus on delivering services to our customers and the public with absolute integrity and professional ethics.

-ល-L: លឿនទាន់ចិត្ត លទ្ធផលល្អ (Leverage Quick and Efficiency)—We focus on providing fast and satisfying service, delivering high confidence to our customers and the public through efficiency and effectiveness.

-ដ-D: ដុះដាលឡើងថ្កាន (Developing)—We focus on developing secure and modern, innovative products and services characterized by superiority and prosperity."

When these core values are practiced daily, they perfectly maximize the Credibility, Reliability, and Intimacy of the Trust Equation, building a fortress of trust that no economic crisis can easily breach.

Second, cultivating trust requires Decisive Governance, rigorous compliance, and the due balance of risk governance with securing opportunities. True governance demands an environment of complete accountability and fairness, strictly governed by a zero-tolerance policy for any ethical breaches, negligence, or deviations from professional codes of conduct.

Financial reporting must be impeccably accurate, maintaining Sacca (សុច្ឆ័យ)—absolute truth and honesty. Complying meticulously with national regulations issued by the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) and the Securities and Exchange Regulator of Cambodia (SERC), as well as complex international frameworks like IFRS and Basel, undeniably proves our organizational reliability to the global market.

However, governance is not just about restriction; it is about risk intelligence. We must perfectly balance strict risk governance with the agility to secure new market opportunities, ensuring that we protect the bank's assets while simultaneously driving sustainable growth and value creation.

Third, we must embrace holistic Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, and Good Corporate Citizenship to optimize the best interests of, and create value for, our customers and all stakeholders and significantly contributing to national socio-economic development with robustness, resilience, inclusion, and sustainability. Guaranteeing long-term stability requires the deep, structural integration of ESG into our core business models.

By prioritizing tangible social impact, responsible lending practices, inclusive financial empowerment, and serious environmental stewardship, we align our operations directly with the nation's sustainable development goals.

When an organization consistently acts with authentic corporate citizenship—prioritizing the common good over short-term gains—it permanently cements its role as a stabilizing pillar of the Cambodian economy. This is exactly how we minimize "Self-Orientation" in the Trust Equation.

Fourth, organizations must maintain continuous innovation and diversification of products and services to best match rapidly changing contextual landscapes. We are currently navigating the unprecedented complexities of the 4th and 5th Industrial Revolutions (4IR/5IR), the intelligent/digital economy, and the emerging era of Artificial Intelligence and Agentic AI. To remain resilient, a BFI must develop strong "contextual capacities"—the ability to read the changing landscape and adapt swiftly. This means embracing digital transformation, aggressively prioritizing advanced cybersecurity, and safeguarding digital data privacy.

We continuously innovate to deliver exceptional customer experiences, exemplified by the ACLEDA Mobile Super App, which carries our modern digital slogan: "The Bank in your hand!" (ធនាគារក្នុងដៃលោកអ្នក). By leveraging AI and digital tools, we elevate our competitive advantage, responsiveness, and productivity, ensuring financial inclusion reaches even the most remote populations.

Fifth, we must foster Collaborative Advantages and Synergy in the spirit of "growing together" through win-win policies/strategies. True, unshakeable resilience does not exist in a vacuum; it fundamentally resides in people and strategic partnerships.

Internally, ACLEDA stands strong because of the unbreakable solidarity, effective teamwork, and profound mutual support that exists across all levels of the organization—from the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee down to every single staff member. Externally, we move beyond traditional competition to embrace "collaborative advantage."

By forging strong, mutually beneficial partnerships with telecom providers, fintech innovators, international development organizations, and other BFIs, we create win-win ecosystems. This cooperative spirit ensures that as we grow, our partners grow, our customers thrive, and the entire national economy benefits.

Finally, underpinning all these strategies is the philosophical framework of Right Leadership and Moral Character. Cultivating trust requires the deep, daily application of the profound framework championed by our President and Group Managing Director, Dr. In Channy: "Right Listening, Right Thinking, Right Doing, and Right Decision-Making."

This means listening attentively to stakeholders, analyzing complex realities without bias, acting strictly for the common good, and making ethical, evidence-based choices.

Furthermore, every technical banking skill must be supported by a strong ethical foundation, known in our culture as Moral Character. Professional success achieved without this ethical grounding is inherently fleeting and extremely dangerous to the financial system.

In conclusion, when a banking institution seamlessly integrates the Trust Equation with its guiding Pole Star of Core Values, decisive governance, ESG commitments, AI-driven digital innovation, and collaborative win-win partnerships, it does more than just survive. It becomes a permanent beacon of trust, driving Cambodia's socio-economic development forward with unparalleled robustness, resilience, inclusion, and sustainability.



Advice for Future Women Leaders in Finance

CLR: Looking ahead, what advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are hoping to build careers in banking, finance, and corporate leadership?

To the brilliant, fiercely capable young Cambodian women aspiring to build immensely impactful careers in banking, finance, and corporate leadership, the extraordinary opportunities before you in the current era of the 4th and 5th Industrial Revolutions are incredibly vast.

Realizing your absolute highest potential, however, requires deep intentionality, profound personal resilience, and an unwavering commitment to your own holistic growth.

Reflecting upon my own life journey and legacy—from starting as a government official at the Ministry of Planning in October 1986, to joining ACLEDA as a junior accountant in 1993, and eventually ascending to Senior Group Chief Financial Officer—I would like to share the practical strategies, professional frameworks, and timeless philosophical wisdoms that have reliably guided my path over the last four decades.

My hope is that these insights will serve as a compass for the next generation to achieve sustainable success across the three essential pillars of life: your studies, your work, and your family.

First: Master Your Craft/Competencies and Cultivate 21st-Century Skills

You must dedicate yourself entirely to building a rock-solid foundation of academic and technical/professional excellence. Whatever your chosen role is, strive passionately to be the absolute best at it.

When you possess genuine, undeniable competence, it is practically impossible for anyone to ignore your immense value. However, you must profoundly understand that technical knowledge alone is not enough. Research conducted by prestigious global organizations has long concluded that 85% of long-term job success comes from well-developed soft skills and people skills, while only 15% comes from hard technical skills.

Therefore, you must rigorously cultivate the "12 21st-Century Skills," which are categorized into three essential pillars. The first pillar is Learning Skills, known as the "4Cs"—Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, and Communication.

The second pillar is Literacy Skills (IMT)—Information Literacy, Media Literacy, and Technology Literacy. In our modern era defined by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the digital economy, IMT skills are mandatory for separating facts from overwhelming misinformation and making data-driven decisions.

The third pillar is Life Skills (FLIPS)—Flexibility, Leadership, Initiative, Productivity, and Social Skills. These intangible elements ultimately dictate your personal and professional quality.

Second: Embrace the "Double Helix of Leadership" and the Three Roles

As I learned deeply through my Organizational Leadership studies at Harvard Business School, becoming an effective corporate leader requires mastering the "Double Helix of Leadership." This means you must constantly balance the rigorous daily work of organizational leadership with a relentless, lifelong journey of personal development.

To navigate rapid contextual changes and drive your organization forward, you must learn to seamlessly wear three distinct hats.

First, act as a Leader as Beacon—setting a clear, unwavering vision and guiding your team with integrity and purpose.

Second, act as a Leader as Architect—meticulously designing agile systems, organizational culture, and robust governance frameworks that allow your teams to thrive and deliver value safely.

Third, act as a Leader as Catalyst—courageously driving innovation, championing digital transformation, and fostering an environment where new ideas can flourish. You do not need to wait for a senior title to practice these roles; you can begin acting as a Beacon, Architect, and Catalyst in your very first job.

Third: Anchor Yourself in Cultural and Spiritual Philosophies

I strongly urge you to wholeheartedly embrace our profound cultural and spiritual philosophies, specifically Iddhipāda Dhamma (ឥទ្ធិបាទធម៌)—The Four Foundations of Success.

Deliberately cultivate Chanda (ឆន្ទៈ)—genuine zeal, intention, and love for your work; Viriya (វិរិយៈ)—immense persistent effort, energy, and the refusal to give up; Citta (ចិត្ត)—laser-sharp mindful focus and consciousness; and Vimansa (វិមំសា)—thorough critical investigation and profound wisdom to find the root causes of complex issues before making decisions.

Coupled with Iddhipāda Dhamma (ឥទ្ធិបាទធម៌), you must integrate the Trai Kod Dhamma (ត្រៃកូដធម៌)—The Three Supreme Virtues: Sacca (សច្ចៈ)—maintaining absolute honesty and truth; Khanti (ឧត្តិ)—practicing immense patience and endurance in the face of hardship; and Katannuta (កតញ្ញតា)—demonstrating profound gratitude to those who help you. Furthermore, to lead people effectively and empathetically, you must embody the Brahmavihara Dhamma (ព្រហ្មវិហារធម៌)—The Four Sublime States: Metta (មេត្តា)—loving-kindness and wishing well for all colleagues, employees, customers, stakeholders, and all living beings; Karuna (ករុណា)—compassion to help alleviate the difficulties of others; Mudita (មុទិតា)—sympathetic joy in celebrating the successes of your peers without envy; and Upekkha (ឧបេក្ខា)—equanimity and maintaining a balanced mind amidst turbulence.

Fourth: Translate Wisdom into Daily Workplace Habits and Resilience

You must translate these grand philosophies into practical, everyday habits. Based on my life experiences, I advise you to smile often, provide the most welcoming and excellent service to your customers, and maintain mutual respect by actively and effectively listening to others. You must be highly careful and vigilant in every task, no matter how small, while smartly avoiding the paralyzing trap of absolute perfectionism.

Cultivate a highly proactive, "do-able attitude." Do not passively wait for someone to open the door for you. Raise your hand boldly, ask directly for the most challenging stretch assignments, and eagerly volunteer for advanced training. Always prepare thoroughly in advance to ensure successful outcomes. Above all, adopt a "Growth Mindset"—a deeply held personal belief that setbacks, challenges, and difficulties are not failures, but rather vital opportunities for deeper learning and future success. Be guided continuously by three core virtues: Curiosity to keep learning, Courage to face your fears and take calculated risks, and Compassion to maintain your humanity.

Fifth: Uphold Integrity, Build Networks, and Maintain Well-being

Underpinning all of your skills must be an unwavering Moral Character. Anchor yourself deeply and permanently in honesty, integrity, and the strictest standards of good corporate governance. You must practice a policy of "zero tolerance" and no exemptions for any breaches of professional ethics, social responsibilities, or integrity.

Concurrently, actively build strong, enduring networks and enthusiastically practice Dhamma Dāna (ធម្មទាន)—the generous, ethical giving of your knowledge, training, and wisdom through mentorship. Find someone highly respected who will heavily invest in your career growth, and when you finally reach a prominent position of leadership yourself, generously mentor the next generation.

Finally, aggressively prioritize your physical and mental well-being, successfully balancing your demanding work with your personal and family life. A warm, supportive family is the foundation of a joyful life. Always remember that long-term sustainable success is a grueling marathon, not a quick sprint.

Sixth: Strategic Alignment and Choosing the Right Professional Ecosystem

In addition to all the above-mentioned advice, having deeply and critically reflected upon my journey and experiences of work and life thus far, there are a number of additional lessons learned and words of wisdom worthwhile for younger generations and those who may be concerned or of interest to take into consideration and manage to realize.

You must practice humility, treating everyone with respect and valuing their contributions, while also engaging in open, honest, and respectful discussions. Challenge ideas constructively, focusing strictly on what is in the best interest and value for the organization and its stakeholders, including from emotional and mental perspectives. In your daily operations, track your progress meticulously with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and ensure that your actions align flawlessly with your overall vision, missions, core values, and corporate culture.

Encourage teamwork and coordination at all levels. Furthermore, take absolute ownership of your responsibilities, practice strict punctuality, and enforce self-discipline.

Critically, you must actively seek out organizations that offer abundant room for growth and opportunities. Do not settle for environments that stifle your potential. You should align your career with organizations that typically demonstrate these key characteristics: (a) they offer competitive salaries, wages, and benefits; (b) they provide merit-based incentives and promotions; (c) they foster an ideal working environment built on mutual respect; (d) they adhere strictly to good corporate governance; (e) they encourage continuous learning and professional development; (f) they prioritize individuals who demonstrate exceptional competence and performance; (g) they maintain strong foundations and effective systems for checks and balances; and (h) they cultivate a deeply ingrained culture of respect, responsibility, accountability, innovation, honesty, and integrity.

A Final Word of Gratitude

Of course, my journey at ACLEDA Bank Plc. has been deeply rewarding, and I am immensely proud of the bank's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all. This commitment is fundamental to our success and reflects a broader, positive trend in Cambodian society.

Finally, I would like to sincerely conclude by formally expressing my profound, heartfelt gratitude to the institutions, ministries, and organizations that have systematically fostered this empowering and inclusive ecosystems. I extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC), the Securities and Exchange Regulator of Cambodia (SERC), the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), all relevant ministries, institutions, and authorities at all levels, and particularly the Royal Government of Cambodia

Most especially, I express my immense and enduring gratitude to Dr. In Channy, our esteemed President and Group Managing Director, alongside our Board of Directors, my highly dedicated colleagues, and all employees across all levels of ACLEDA Bank Plc. and the Bank's subsidiaries, who perform with incredible synergy, strong will, a genuine commitment to excellence, and wholehearted effort.

I am equally grateful to my supportive families, relatives, and friends; our millions of deeply valued customers, partners, and investors; and the general public for their unwavering trust, confidence, support, and loyalty. We deeply appreciate the continuous opportunity to serve you and deliver the Bank's best products and services—offerings we consistently innovate and diversify to optimize the best interests of, and create value for, our customers and all stakeholders.

Through this, we remain fully committed to significantly contributing to Cambodia's socio-economic development with robustness, resilience, inclusion, and sustainability in the context of sustainable development, the transformation toward a digital, AI-driven, and intelligent economy, the 4th and 5th Industrial Revolutions, and the emerging era of Agentic AI. **CLR**



MONYPICH SOU

FOUNDER & CEO - TUBE COFFEE



As Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of TUBE Coffee, Monypich Sou has helped build one of Cambodia's most recognizable homegrown coffee brands. Since launching the business in 2017, she has led its expansion from a single takeaway café to a nationwide network serving customers across Phnom Penh and major cities throughout the Kingdom.

Under her leadership, TUBE Coffee has evolved alongside Cambodia's rapidly growing urban consumer market, combining affordability, quality, and innovation while creating spaces that bring communities together. Passionate about developing people and building strong teams, Monypich believes sustainable businesses are built through continuous learning, customer trust, and a commitment to long-term growth.

In this interview, Monypich reflects on the growing role of women in Cambodia's food and beverage industry, the evolution of the TUBE Coffee brand, creating welcoming community spaces, leading in a fast-changing consumer market, and her advice for the next generation of women entrepreneurs.

Women in Cambodia's F&B Industry

CLR: Cambodia's food and beverage sector has become increasingly competitive and dynamic in recent years. As a female entrepreneur and business leader, how have you seen opportunities for women within the industry evolve?

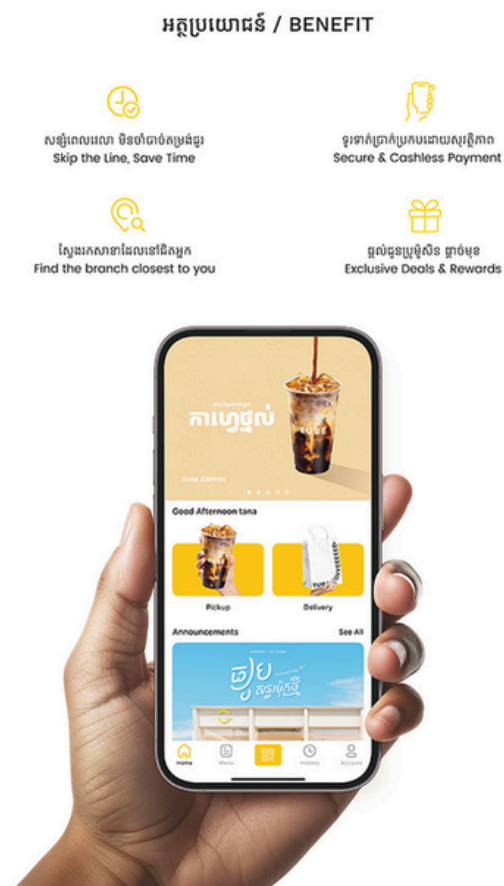
As a female entrepreneur and business leader, I have witnessed remarkable progress in the opportunities available to women within Cambodia's food and beverage industry. Over the past several years, women have increasingly taken on important roles across all levels of the sector, from frontline operations to management and executive leadership. At TUBE Coffee, women represent approximately half of our workforce and contribute significantly across various departments, helping drive both operational excellence and business growth.

I have found that women in the industry are highly capable, adaptable, and resilient, bringing strong strengths in customer service, team leadership, and operational management. The industry today offers greater opportunities for women to develop professionally, assume leadership positions, and pursue entrepreneurial ventures of their own. I firmly believe that women bring unique perspectives, foster positive workplace cultures, and drive innovation, all of which play an important role in shaping the continued growth and success of Cambodia's F&B sector.

Building the TUBE Coffee Brand

CLR: TUBE Coffee has grown into a well-known local lifestyle and café brand. What was your original vision for TUBE, and how has the brand evolved alongside Cambodia’s young and growing urban consumer market?

My original vision for TUBE Coffee has remained consistent since day one: to bring the joy of coffee to Cambodian people through products that are fast, affordable, and high in quality, while building a homegrown coffee brand that can be recognized and respected both nationally and internationally. From the beginning, we focused on creating a convenient takeaway coffee experience that aligns with the fast-paced lifestyles of Cambodia’s young and increasingly urban population.



As Cambodia’s consumer market has evolved, so have customer expectations. Today’s consumers seek more than affordability; they value quality, innovation, authenticity, and meaningful brand experiences.

In response, TUBE Coffee has continuously evolved by enhancing product quality, introducing new concepts and offerings, and investing in the overall customer experience. While our core mission remains unchanged, we have grown beyond being simply a coffee chain to become a modern Cambodian lifestyle brand that stays closely connected to local communities and reflects the aspirations of a new generation of Cambodian consumers.

Creating Safe and Comfortable Community Spaces

CLR: Coffee shops today often serve as more than just places to eat or drink, becoming “third spaces” where people can meet, work, study, and connect. How important is it for brands like TUBE to create safe, welcoming spaces for women, young people, and communities to gather?

I strongly believe that coffee shops today should be much more than places to enjoy food and beverages; they should serve as welcoming, inclusive and safe spaces where people can relax, work, study, collaborate, and connect with their communities. As the concept of the “third space” becomes increasingly important in modern urban life, brands have a responsibility to create environments where everyone feels comfortable and valued.

At TUBE Coffee, we are committed to ensuring that all customers, particularly women and young people feel respected, secure, and welcomed whenever they visit our stores. We thoughtfully design our spaces and customer experiences to encourage social interaction, creativity, productivity, and meaningful connections. This is reflected not only in our store concepts but also in the service culture fostered by our team members.

Creating a positive and inclusive environment is about more than customer satisfaction; it is about building a sense of belonging. By providing spaces where people feel comfortable spending time, meeting others, and expressing themselves, we strengthen our relationship with customers and become a meaningful part of their daily lives, communities, and personal journeys.

Leadership and Entrepreneurship

CLR: Building and scaling a consumer-facing brand requires balancing operations, creativity, and customer expectations. How do you personally approach leadership and decision-making within Cambodia's fast-moving F&B environment?

Leading in Cambodia's fast-moving F&B industry requires a careful balance between operational excellence, creativity, and a deep understanding of customer needs.

My approach to leadership is grounded in being both strategic and adaptable, ensuring that decisions are practical, timely and aligned with the realities of the market while remaining focused on the long-term vision of the brand.



In a highly competitive and rapidly evolving environment, I believe it is essential to stay close to customers, listen to feedback and continuously monitor changing consumer behaviors and market trends.

This enables us to make informed decisions quickly while maintaining consistency in quality, service, and brand standards.

Equally important is the people behind the business. I value every team member and believe that strong teamwork, open communication, accountability and mutual respect are fundamental to sustainable success.

As a leader, I strive to create a culture that encourages continuous learning, innovation, and personal growth.

When people are empowered to develop their skills, contribute ideas, and take ownership of their work, both the individuals and the organization are able to grow together.

Ultimately, my goal is to build not only a successful business, but also a resilient team and a brand that continues to evolve with the needs of Cambodia's consumers.

Advice for Future Women Entrepreneurs

CLR: What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are interested in starting businesses or building their own brands in Cambodia's growing consumer and lifestyle sectors?



My advice to young Cambodian women who aspire to start businesses or build their own brands is to believe in your ideas, trust your abilities and never be afraid to start small. Every successful business begins with a single step and growth often comes through persistence, patience, and continuous improvement rather than overnight success.

It is important to focus on truly understanding your customers, delivering consistent quality and building a brand with a clear identity and purpose. In today's competitive consumer and lifestyle sectors, authenticity and trust are just as important as innovation. Customers connect with brands that have meaningful stories and values behind them.

I also encourage young entrepreneurs to invest in people and build strong teams. No business succeeds alone. Surround yourself with individuals who share your vision, empower them to grow and create a culture based on trust, respect, and collaboration. Strong businesses are ultimately built by strong people.

Most importantly, remain committed to learning. Seek mentorship, listen to advice from experienced leaders, stay curious, and view challenges as opportunities to grow. Entrepreneurship is a journey filled with both successes and setbacks, but resilience, adaptability, and a long-term vision will help you navigate that journey. Cambodia offers tremendous opportunities for the next generation of women entrepreneurs and I hope more young women will have the confidence to pursue their ambitions and create brands that make a meaningful impact on our communities and our country. **CLR**

NITIKAR NITH

SENIOR ASSOCIATE - TILLEKE & GIBBINS CAMBODIA



Nitikar Nith has built a distinguished legal career at the intersection of Cambodian and international business law.

As a Senior Associate at Tilleke & Gibbins Cambodia, a Legal 500 Asia Pacific-ranked practitioner, certified arbitrator and mediator, and Vice-President of the Association Franco-Cambodgienne des Avocats et Juristes (AFCAJ), she combines private practice with legal education, mentorship, and advocacy for the next generation of professionals.

Beyond advising local and international businesses on corporate, commercial, employment, intellectual property, and dispute resolution matters, Nitikar is deeply committed to strengthening Cambodia's legal profession through teaching, professional associations, and community initiatives.

Her work reflects a belief that education, opportunity, and strong professional networks are essential to building a more inclusive and internationally competitive legal sector.

In this edition of 50 Khmer Women Voices 2026, Nitikar shares her journey as a Cambodian lawyer, the growing opportunities for women in the legal profession, the importance of legal education and public awareness, and why she believes Cambodia's next generation of women professionals is well positioned to help shape the country's future.

On the Evolving Role of Women in Cambodia's Legal Profession

As a young Cambodian legal professional working with both local and international businesses, how have you seen opportunities for women within Cambodia's legal sector evolve in recent years?

When I was admitted to the Bar in 2018, Cambodia's legal landscape was still quite traditional—especially in litigation and dispute resolution, where women were underrepresented. Today, I see real change. More women are pursuing advanced legal education, joining the Bar, and stepping into leadership roles. This progress is real, and it is accelerating.

At Tilleke & Gibbins, I practice corporate and commercial law; at Nith & Associate, I built the dispute resolution and litigation practice. The profession is becoming more receptive to women leading in areas once considered male domains. My recognition as a Leading Associate by Legal 500 Asia Pacific 2025 reflects not just a personal milestone but a broader industry shift. That gives me hope.

International platforms have amplified this momentum. In 2019, the French Embassy nominated me to represent Cambodia, along with other inspiring Cambodian women leaders, at the Women Forum Asia in Singapore—a proud moment that showed Cambodian women professionals belong on the regional stage. As Vice-President of the Association Franco-Cambodgienne des Avocats et Juristes (AFCAJ), I see a growing cohort of young Cambodian women entering legal practice and building networks that will sustain this progress.

Through my work on the AmCham Women Steering Committee—collaborating with the UN and other Chambers of Commerce on diversity initiatives—I have seen the conversation move beyond celebrating individual achievements. We are now building systems that will open doors for the next generation.

Most recently, I attended the IBA Global Women Lawyers Conference in Lisbon. Hearing senior women leaders share their challenges, breakthroughs, and persistence reinforced my belief in the power of women's leadership. If they can do it, so can we. I am deeply optimistic about Cambodia's future.

On Legal Education and Public Awareness

Legal literacy and regulatory understanding are becoming increasingly important as Cambodia's business environment continues to develop. How important is improving legal education and awareness among the wider Cambodian public, particularly for young women entering professional careers or business?

Legal education is foundational to Cambodia's development. As a part-time lecturer at the Royal University of Law and Economics, I witness firsthand how a strong legal foundation empowers young professionals—especially women—to engage meaningfully in our growing business environment.

Cambodia has few internationally recognized training programs for young professionals and students, and registration fees for those that exist often remain out of reach. This makes domestic legal education efforts critical.

Through Sala Traju, a Cambodian legal association I help lead, we mobilize professionals to strengthen the sector—organizing educational training, internships for students, and events, and collaborating with public and private organizations to improve legal knowledge across Cambodia.

For young women, legal literacy opens doors. Understanding contracts, regulations, and dispute resolution equips them to enter professional careers on equal footing.

I organize forums, career days, and mentoring programs for underprivileged students, including those in francophone bilingual programs.

As Vice-President of Komar Chey, a French humanitarian association, I help rural students in Banteay Meanchey Province learn French and gain access to higher education. Education should never be limited by geography or economics.

On Supporting Business Growth in Cambodia

You work closely with companies navigating market entry, corporate setup, and regulatory requirements in Cambodia.

What are some of the most important legal or regulatory areas businesses should better understand when operating in the Kingdom?

I assist local and international clients with market entry, corporate setup, licensing, commercial transactions, employment, energy, real estate, and intellectual property. From this experience, I would highlight several key areas:

·**Regulatory and licensing:** Cambodia's framework requires intensive engagement with multiple agencies, and requirements vary significantly by sector—energy, manufacturing, education, pharmaceuticals. I regularly coordinate with regulatory bodies and ministries on compliance and market entry.

·**Intellectual property:** IP protection presents both significant risk and opportunity. Businesses should invest in trademark enforcement and anti-counterfeiting strategies early—not reactively.

·**Employment law:** Termination procedures, severance calculations, and employee rights require careful planning—especially for companies restructuring or exiting the market.

·**Dispute resolution:** Cambodia's National Commercial Arbitration Centre (NCAC) is growing in importance. Familiarity with litigation, arbitration, and mediation is increasingly essential.

On Building Confidence for the Next Generation

Many young professionals find the legal profession highly competitive and demanding. What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who may be interested in pursuing careers in law, corporate advisory, or regulatory fields?

First, step into challenging matters before you feel ready. Some of my most formative experiences came from handling complex litigation early in my career. When I first appeared before the Supreme Court, I was nervous but determined—and I received commendations for my defense in my very first case at that level. That moment remains one of my proudest achievements.



Second, never stop learning. I pursued my Master's in France on an Eiffel Excellence Scholarship and continue developing through professional training programs, including IPBA, the International Bar Association, Lex Mundi Institute, and my recent NCAC mediator and arbitrator certification. In Cambodia, you must be proactive about your growth.

Third, cultivate relationships. Professional relationships, patiently nurtured, open doors you cannot anticipate. Participating in professional associations or commercial chambers helps build your network and professional relationships.

Fourth, give back. Mentoring junior colleagues and teaching law students strengthens the profession and builds your own leadership. Watching a student or mentee gain confidence in their career reminds me that leadership and generosity are inseparable.

Finally, professional excellence does not require sacrificing everything else. As a mother, I have shown that it is possible to succeed professionally without sacrificing my personal life"

I achieved my Legal 500 ranking and professional recognition while navigating early motherhood. The path is demanding, but it is absolutely possible.

Above all, be bold and be confident. Believe in yourself and never let society or peer pressure define who you are. Believe in education and hard work—this will of course pay off.

On Cambodia's Future Professional Landscape

As Cambodia's economy becomes increasingly connected to regional and international markets, what opportunities do you see emerging for the next generation of Cambodian legal and business professionals?



I see tremendous opportunities ahead for Cambodia's legal professionals. First, there is growing demand for professionals who bridge jurisdictions and languages.

My trilingual capabilities in Khmer, English, and French—and my experience coordinating between multinational clients and Cambodian authorities—have been central to my career. The next generation combining local knowledge with international training will be exceptionally well-positioned.

Second, emerging sectors—renewable energy, sustainable development, green business—are creating new practice areas. Expertise in ESG compliance and green investment frameworks will be in high demand.



Third, alternative dispute resolution is rapidly growing. The NCAC recently launched its first mediator training program, and professionals in this space will support business confidence and strengthen the rule of law.

Fourth, regional integration creates cross-border opportunities. Through AFCAJ, France Alumni Cambodge, and the French Cambodian Chamber of Commerce, I have seen Cambodian professionals connect with peers across jurisdictions and create mutual opportunities.

Fifth, the next generation must prepare for technological transformation, particularly artificial intelligence and, in time, quantum computing.

In Cambodia, we have not yet discussed AI utilization in the professional landscape as much as other markets have.

However, as part of globalization, this is something we cannot escape. Legal professionals who embrace AI tools for research, document review, and practice management will have a significant advantage.

I encourage young professionals to stay curious about these technologies and integrate them into their work.

Last but not least, I am optimistic. Cambodia's young professionals are well-educated, internationally connected, and motivated.

With the right mentoring and networks, they will bring our legal practice to international standards—while staying true to the commitment to community that defines us. **CLR**

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PHEAKDEY POK

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER - J TRUST ROYAL BANK



With more than two decades of experience across auditing, corporate finance, and commercial banking, Pheakdey Pok, Chief Financial Officer of J Trust Royal Bank, has built a career at the forefront of Cambodia's evolving financial sector.

She has played a key role in strengthening financial governance, leading complex organisational transformation, and helping shape one of the country's leading commercial banks during a period of significant change.

Passionate about developing future leaders, Pheakdey believes Cambodia's banking sector will continue to be driven by digitalisation, stronger governance, regional integration, and investment in people.

She is also a strong advocate for creating greater opportunities for women to build successful careers across finance and banking.

In this interview, Pheakdey reflects on the evolution of women in Cambodia's financial sector, leading through organisational transformation, bringing international experience back to Cambodia, the future of banking, and her advice for the next generation of women leaders.

Women in Cambodia's Banking and Finance Sector

CLR: Over the course of your career, you have worked across auditing, corporate finance, and commercial banking. How have you seen opportunities for women in Cambodia's financial sector evolve, and what progress still needs to be made?

Over the course of my career, I have witnessed significant and encouraging progress in the advancement of women within Cambodia's banking and financial sector. When I began my professional journey nearly two decades ago, particularly during my time at ANZ, the presence of local female executives was very limited. Representation at senior levels and especially in corporate finance, risk management, and executive leadership—was still evolving.

Today, it is truly inspiring to see more women stepping forward, taking on leadership roles, and making meaningful contributions across financial institutions. Women are not only participating but they are leading with professionalism, resilience, and strong governance.

That said, our journey is not yet complete. There is still a need to strengthen representation at the most senior levels and within highly technical fields, particularly in areas such as technology and digital banking.

Moving forward, it is essential to build structured pathways through mentorship, leadership development programs, and equal access to career opportunities.

Most importantly, we must continue to nurture an environment where women feel empowered to lead with confidence, authenticity, and purpose. Progress is not only about numbers but it is about creating a culture where leadership is inclusive, diverse, and sustainable.

Leadership Through Change and Transformation

CLR: You played a key role in the financial transition and integration following J Trust's acquisition of ANZ Royal in 2019. What were some of the most important leadership lessons you learned from managing such a significant transformation?

The integration following J Trust's acquisition of ANZ Royal in 2019 was both a challenging and defining chapter in my career. It reinforced that leading through transformation requires a careful balance of decisiveness, clear communication, and disciplined execution.

One of the most critical lessons was the importance of strong governance and structured execution, with clear accountability across project leaders and team members and in particularly during periods of uncertainty.



Without clarity of roles and ownership, even well-designed transformations can lose momentum.

At the same time, leadership must remain deeply people-centric. Open communication, trust, and a clear sense of direction are essential to guide teams through change.

Transformation impacts not only systems and processes, but also people's confidence and sense of stability.

Ultimately, transformation is not just about system go-live or meeting regulatory milestones. It is about alignment to aligning people, culture, and purpose. Sustainable success can only be achieved when the entire organization moves forward together with shared confidence, clarity, and commitment.

International Experience and Developing Future Leaders

CLR: Having worked within international banking environments and global financial standards, how important is it to bring this knowledge and experience back to Cambodia, particularly in helping develop the next generation of women leaders in finance?

Exposure to international banking environments and global standards has played a vital role in shaping my professional perspective.

It goes beyond technical expertise and it builds discipline, strengthens governance capabilities, and provides valuable experience in managing diverse stakeholders with different priorities and expectations. Bringing this experience back to Cambodia is essential.

This allows us to strengthen our local institutions, raise industry standards, and contribute meaningfully to the long-term sustainability of the sector.

For the next generation of leaders, especially women—international exposure is transformative. It challenges perspectives, encourages innovation, and builds the confidence needed to operate in an increasingly complex and competitive environment.

Investing in people is one of the most important responsibilities we hold as leaders.

Through mentorship, structured development programs, and cross-border opportunities, we can cultivate capable, principled leaders who are equipped not only with technical skills, but also with strong leadership values.



The Future of Cambodia's Banking Sector

CLR: Cambodia's banking industry continues to evolve through digitalisation, stronger governance, and increasing regional integration. What trends do you believe will shape the sector over the next decade?

Cambodia's banking sector is entering a new phase of evolution, one that presents both significant opportunities and emerging challenges, particularly in the context of global economic uncertainty.

Looking ahead, several key trends will shape the industry:

- Accelerated digitalisation, with AI evolving from a support function to a core driver of banking strategy to enhancing efficiency, risk management, and customer experience
- Stronger governance and continued alignment with international regulatory standards
- A shift toward more diversified and sustainable business models, including ESG integration
- Increased focus on risk management and asset quality, balancing growth with prudent risk-return considerations
- Greater regional connectivity within ASEAN, enabling knowledge sharing and enhancing competitiveness

In this evolving landscape, success will require discipline, adaptability, and forward-looking leadership. Institutions that remain agile and resilient—while maintaining strong fundamentals—will be best positioned to thrive.

Advice for Women Pursuing Careers in Finance

What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are interested in building careers in accounting, finance, banking, or corporate leadership?

To young Cambodian women aspiring to build a career in finance, I would like to share a simple but important message: believe in your potential and remain committed to continuous learning and growth. Build a strong technical foundation, and be open to developing diverse skill sets including emerging areas such as digital banking, artificial intelligence (AI), and cybersecurity. Be proactive, stay curious, and never hesitate to step outside your comfort zone.

Meantime, integrity, discipline, resilience, and the ability to manage stakeholders effectively are critical qualities that will support your long-term success. Equally important is the support system you build around you. Seek out mentors, learn from those who have walked the path before you, and surround yourself with individuals who challenge and inspire you to grow.

The journey will not always be easy—it will be demanding and, at times, uncertain and sometimes, you need to be brave enough to walk on thin ice. However, it will also be deeply meaningful.

There is a growing space for women to lead, to innovate, and to shape the future of Cambodia's financial sector.

Your role in that future is not only important—it is essential. **CLR**

ROSETTE SOK

SENIOR ASSOCIATE - KINSTELLAR SOUTHEAST ASIA (CAMBODIA)



As Senior Associate at SokSiphana Sethalay in association with Kinstellar Southeast Asia (Cambodia) in association with Sok Siphana Sethalay Law Office, Rosette Sok advises local and international clients on corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, and cross-border commercial transactions.

She has built her career supporting businesses and investors as Cambodia's legal and investment environment continues to evolve.

Rosette believes the future of Cambodia's legal profession will be shaped by stronger leadership, international collaboration, and creating more opportunities for women to progress into senior roles. She is also passionate about mentoring young professionals and supporting the next generation of legal talent.

In this interview, Rosette reflects on the changing role of women in Cambodia's legal profession, the evolution of the country's legal environment, authentic leadership, and her advice for future women leaders in law.

Women in Cambodia's Legal Profession

CLR: How have you seen the role of women evolve within Cambodia's legal and professional services sector over the years, and what progress still needs to be made?

Beyond numbers, there has been a noticeable evolution in the nature of women's participation in the legal and professional services sectors. Women today are increasingly taking on client-facing responsibilities, leading complex transactions, managing teams and key client relationships, and playing active roles in cross-border matters. This is in line with a growing societal acceptance and celebration of women pursuing demanding careers and having leadership ambition.

International exposure in these sectors has certainly played an important role in this progression in Cambodia – working with global clients and cross-border transactions exposes us to more diverse and inclusive leadership and deal teams. Opportunities like secondments and regional collaborations also help shape these broader perspectives on leadership.

The challenge today is less about entry but more about sustained progression into senior leadership roles. Unfortunately, there are still systemic barriers and biases in place that result in fewer women progressing into partnership or executive leadership position.

Women continue to face disproportionate expectations around caregiving responsibilities, both outside and at work. In the office, for instance, female leaders may be expected to shoulder a greater share of the emotional labour within teams, such as giving more consideration to managing team wellbeing and interpersonal dynamics – responsibilities which are valuable but not always recognised or rewarded in the same way as more objective or traditional measures of performance.

Challenges also remain in overcoming entrenched perceptions of authority and leadership. Assumptions may occasionally be made that younger female lawyers in deal teams only play a small supporting role, rather than serving as one of the key advisers on the deal. This type of unconscious bias can create an additional hurdle in female leaders being afforded the same level of credibility and trust. I have been very privileged in my life to have been surrounded by strong women, personally and professionally. Now, as I lead a team of mostly young females, I feel a sense of responsibility towards helping to build a strong pipeline of capable women in the legal profession.

Mentorship and creating opportunities for meaningful professional development is important not just for their individual careers, but for the long-term strength and sustainability of the profession as a whole.

Going forward, the focus should be on genuine inclusion and influence. This requires active advocacy from strong leaders in promotion and client-facing opportunities, and firm cultures that intentionally support and retain female talent throughout their careers.

Ultimately, meaningful progression should be measured not by how many women there are in the profession, but by how many are empowered to lead.

Cambodia's Evolving Legal Environment

CLR: As Cambodia's economy continues to develop and attract investment, how is the legal profession evolving to meet the changing needs of businesses and investors?

As Cambodia's economy continues to mature and integrate more deeply into regional and global markets, the legal profession has had to evolve significantly alongside it.

One of the more notable developments has been the growing complexity of transactions and regulatory frameworks.

Cambodia continues to attract sophisticated clients who place greater emphasis on regulatory compliance, corporate governance, risk management and ESG considerations, which has broadened the scope of legal advisory services. This requires lawyers to navigate both domestic legal requirements – which are constantly evolving – and international standards.

An equally important trend is the increasing sophistication of Cambodian businesses themselves. While much attention is often placed on foreign investment into Cambodia, we are also seeing a growing number of local businesses and conglomerates with financial strength, operational capability and strategic ambition to expand within and beyond Cambodia.

As these companies look to enter new markets, pursue cross-border acquisition, establish regional operations or seek international financing, they face many of the same legal, regulatory and governance considerations as multi-national investors. As advisers, the firm is increasingly supporting Cambodian businesses, not only in their domestic growth, but also in navigating the complexities of regional and international expansion, which reflects the continued maturation of Cambodia's private sector and the broader economy.

Being part of an international platform, we are placed in a particularly strong position to support the evolving needs of our domestic and foreign clients.



Through our regional and global network, with Kinstellar and Kinstellar Southeast Asia, we are able to draw on international best practices, sector-specific expertise and experience from other emerging markets that may be facing similar legal and commercial challenges. We work alongside and learn from colleagues across multiple jurisdictions on cross-border transactions, enabling us to provide advice that is both locally grounded and aligned with international expectations. This is particularly valuable for our clients who seek advisers capable of bridging local requirements with global standards of governance, compliance and transaction management and execution.

Leadership in Law and Business

CLR: The legal profession often requires balancing technical expertise, leadership, and client relationships. How do you personally approach leadership within a fast-moving and demanding industry?

For me, leadership is fundamentally an exercise in self-awareness and continual self-development. Early in life, I have always held a fairly conventional view of leadership. I associated it with a particular archetype – someone decisive, dominant, unwaveringly confident and often the loudest voice in the room – all qualities which I never felt I had or could be. I also believed leadership was something one had to fully possess and know how to do before stepping into a leadership role. As a young female, I have always felt that I needed more experience, more certainty or simply more time before I, and by extension, others, could legitimately consider myself as someone ready to lead.

What I have learned is that leadership does not begin once you have all the answers. More often, it begins when you are willing to step forward despite not having them. I was lucky to have been given a leadership role at my firm quite early on in my career. I quickly learned that the challenge was not simply learning how to lead others but learning to trust myself to do it well. I had to develop, very quickly, an understanding of who I was, my values, what principles guide my decision-making and the type of leader I wanted to be. Rather than trying to conform to society's model of leadership, I had to find a style that was authentic to me, while still earning the trust, confidence and respect of my colleagues and my clients.

We have often been conditioned to view leadership as something external – as a set of behaviours, actions or qualities exercised over others. My experience has been the opposite. Leadership is built through developing internal clarity. One of the greatest benefits of maturing, professionally and personally, is the gradual process of becoming more comfortable in your own skin and more secure in your identity. Leadership begins when you develop a clear understanding of who you are and what you stand for, and when you learn to trust in that foundation.

That internal clarity then translates outwards. It influences how you respond under pressure, how you navigate your team under uncertainty, how you build credibility with clients and how you create an environment in which others can develop and succeed. In a fast-moving and demanding industry, my approach has always been to stay anchored internally, in a set of values and principles that remains constant, even when my external circumstances are not.



In the past year, I have learnt that the most effective leaders are perhaps those who possess the self-awareness to understand who they are, the confidence to trust in that understanding and the discipline to lead in alignment with it.

One of the most enduring lessons I have learnt from my dad is that, when faced with a difficult decision, you should choose the course of action that allows you to sleep peacefully at night. Over time, I have come to view that as a simple but powerful test of integrity in leaders. It is a reminder that leadership is not merely about achieving outcomes, but about the manner in which you treat and lead others, which will always be a reflection of who you are, internally.

Supporting the Next Generation of Legal Talent**What can law firms, universities, and the wider private sector do to better support young Cambodian women entering the legal profession today?**

Law firms, universities and the wider private sector have already made significant progress in creating opportunities for young women to enter the profession. The next step is to focus on how we support them once they are there.

A great deal of emphasis is rightfully placed on developing technical excellence, but there can be less discussion occurring around the interpersonal and emotional skills that are equally critical to long-term success. Skills such as emotional intelligence, confidence, communication, resilience and self-awareness are essentially for effective leadership, yet they are rarely taught in a structured way.

This can be particularly important for young women, who face unique pressures around confidence, credibility and leadership expectations as they progress through their careers. Rather than characterising these as “soft skills” – a term which can at times suggests peripherality – we should recognise these as being fundamental leadership competencies that are essential to building high-performing teams.

Mentorship is also critical. Young women benefit enormously from seeing other women from different socioeconomic backgrounds who have successfully navigated similar challenges and from having access to mentors who can provide guidance and honest conversations about career progression.

Law firms, universities and the private sector can create more structured opportunities for these connections through mentoring programs, networking initiatives and leadership development programs.

Equally important is fostering a culture that views female success as collaborative rather than competitive. As a society, we need to move away from the idea that one woman’s success needs to come at the expense of another.

The goal should be to build a strong pipeline and community of talented and capable women who support and create opportunities for one another. When one of us shines, we all shine.

Advice for Future Women Leaders in Law**What advice would you give to young Cambodian women hoping to build long-term careers in law, corporate advisory, or professional services?**

One of the most valuable things that you can do is to learn to be secure in who you are. Take the time to understand your strengths, your values, your motivation and the way you work best – not just as a professional, but as an individual.

The more grounded you are in your sense of self, the less likely you are to be unsettled by self-doubt, comparison or external perceptions of success.

That sense of stability will become an important source of resilience throughout your career.

Learn to recognise and trust in your own value, as well. Every person brings something unique to the table, whether it's their perspective, work ethic, judgment, empathy, creativity or ability to connect with others. Early in your career, it can be tempting to believe that having confidence comes from having all the answers. In reality, confidence comes from trusting that you will be capable of learning, adapting and growing when the time comes.

I have not had a particularly long-career yet, but I have come to appreciate that any long-career will be built through consistency, integrity, perseverance and the ability to pivot and bounce back when things don't go as planned.

When I look back on my career several decades from now, I hope I will consider it to be successful not simply because of the positions I held or the transactions I worked on, but because I positively impacted the people around me.

I am very lucky to have had strong women pave the path for me – especially, my mom – and I will believe that my career has been successful if any women I work with, mentored or lead go on to become exceptional professionals and leaders themselves. More than any measurable key performance indicator, leadership is about creating opportunities for others and to help them realise potential that is even greater than your own. **CLR**



SATO MOEUN

FOUNDER - MEKONG FINE FOOD



As Chairwoman and Co-Founder of NorKhmer Concepts, trading as Mekong Fine Food, Sato Moeun has built one of Cambodia's leading premium food distribution companies, supplying luxury hotels, fine dining restaurants, embassies, and retailers across the Kingdom. Her journey from humble beginnings in Siem Reap to leading a nationally recognised business reflects resilience, discipline, and a commitment to excellence.

Passionate about building strong teams and trusted relationships, Sato believes long-term success comes from consistency, professionalism, and investing in people. She is also committed to creating more opportunities for Cambodian talent within the country's growing food and hospitality industries.

In this interview, Sato reflects on her entrepreneurial journey, the evolving role of women in Cambodia's hospitality sector, building trust in business, supporting SME growth, and the legacy she hopes to leave for the next generation of Cambodian entrepreneurs.

Building a Business from the Ground Up

CLR: Your journey has taken you from working in kitchens and hospitality to building one of Cambodia's leading premium food distribution companies. Looking back, what were some of the key lessons that shaped your leadership and entrepreneurial journey?

My journey taught me that leadership is built long before you ever have a title. I grew up in difficult circumstances in Banteay Srei, and that taught me responsibility very early. Later, the structure and discipline I received through education changed the direction of my life. When I started working in hospitality in Siem Reap, I learned that excellence is not something glamorous — it comes from repetition, consistency, and respect for standards.

Then, when I moved into sales in Phnom Penh, I learned something equally important: you also need courage, confidence, and the ability to earn trust.

For me, leadership has always been the combination of those two worlds — operational discipline and commercial courage.

When we built Mekong Fine Food, I did not want to grow fast for the sake of growth. I wanted to build something trusted.

That mindset shaped everything: how we handle products, how we serve clients, how we train our team, and how we make decisions

One of the biggest lessons for me is that trust is earned quietly — through consistency, follow-through, and attention to detail. Another is that humility matters. I understand the business from many angles because I have worked in kitchens, front of house, sales, and logistics myself. That helps me lead with realism, not ego.

Women in Cambodia's Food and Hospitality Industry

CLR: The food, hospitality, and distribution sectors employ many women, yet relatively few hold senior leadership positions. How have you seen opportunities for women in these industries evolve, and what more can be done to support future female leaders?

I have seen a real change in recent years. Women have always been essential to Cambodia's food and hospitality sectors — in kitchens, service, administration, sales, and day-to-day operations — but too often they have not been given the same visibility or authority in leadership. What is changing now is that more women are stepping into decision-making roles, more businesses are recognising female leadership, and more young women are beginning to believe that these positions are possible for them. In my own company, I have worked hard to build a strong Khmer team, and I am proud that our management team includes many women in meaningful leadership roles.

What still needs to happen is very practical. Women need clearer pathways to leadership, more formal training, more trust placed in them early, and more businesses that invest in people rather than just positions.

I strongly believe talent exists everywhere; what is often missing is structure, opportunity, and belief. We also need to keep formalising our industries, because formal employment creates more stable careers, better protections, and more room for women to grow professionally over time. My hope is that the next generation of Cambodian women will not only participate in these industries, but shape them.

Building a Cambodian Success Story

CLR: Mekong Fine Food has grown rapidly from a startup into a market leader serving luxury hotels, restaurants, embassies, and retailers. What do you believe has been the key to building trust and long-term relationships in Cambodia's business environment?

In Cambodia, trust is everything. This is a relationship-driven market, so long-term success depends on your reputation, your consistency, and whether people believe you will do what you promised. In our case, trust started with relationships built over many years in hospitality and business.

Many of our earliest clients knew me from previous roles, and they gave us an opportunity because they trusted our work ethic and our standards. But relationships can only open the door — after that, performance has to keep it open.

What built long-term trust for Mekong Fine Food was reliability. In premium food distribution, clients need certainty: that the product will arrive in the right condition, at the right time, and to the right standard.

That is why we have always been hands-on about logistics, cold-chain discipline, and quality control. Even during difficult periods, including logistics disruption, we focused on protecting client trust by delivering and communicating well. I think that is the key in Cambodia's business environment: respect relationships, follow through on every commitment, and never let short-term convenience damage long-term credibility.

Entrepreneurship, Resilience, and Growth

You have spoken openly about the challenges many SMEs face, particularly around financing, talent, and scaling operations. What advice would you give to women entrepreneurs looking to build and grow businesses in Cambodia today?



My advice to women entrepreneurs in Cambodia is first to believe that you do not need to start with perfect conditions to build something meaningful.

I did not come from wealth or property, and one of the biggest challenges for SMEs is still access to finance.

Traditional lending can be very difficult for growing businesses, especially if you do not have collateral.

Talent is another challenge, because growth depends not only on finding capable people, but on building a culture where they can succeed.

So resilience matters — but resilience should not mean trying to do everything alone. It means staying committed, staying adaptable, and finding the right support when it becomes available.

Practically, I would say: start with the client and solve a real need. Go the extra mile. Build strong operations early, not only sales.

Do things formally and transparently, because that becomes more important as you grow and as better clients and partners look for reliable businesses.

And invest in people. A good business is not just built on products or ideas; it is built on a team that shares your standards and your values.

If you stay grounded, keep learning, and protect your reputation, growth becomes much more sustainable.

Leading the Next Generation

You have built a company with a strong Khmer team and a culture focused on collaboration and excellence. What kind of legacy would you like to leave for the next generation of Cambodian women entering business, entrepreneurship, and leadership roles?

The legacy I want to leave is not only a successful company. I want to leave proof that a Cambodian woman, with the right discipline, values, and support, can build a business that operates at world-class standards.

I want young Cambodian women to see that leadership does not require coming from privilege. It requires effort, integrity, courage, and the willingness to keep learning.

If my journey can help someone believe that her starting point does not define her future, that would mean a great deal to me.

I also want my legacy to be visible in people. We have built a strong Khmer team and a culture centred on collaboration, accountability, and excellence.

To me, the best leader is not the one who is always needed, but the one who builds a team that can stand strong on its own. Beyond business, I think often about giving back to Banteay Srei through better schooling, health support, and economic opportunity.

So if I had to describe the legacy I hope for, it would be this: stronger women, stronger teams, and more opportunity being passed forward than held back. **CLR**



SIVHUANG LAY

CO-FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR - DICHI ACADEMY



As Co-founder and Managing Director of Dichi Academy, Lay Sivhuang is helping prepare Cambodia's next generation of digital talent through industry-led education, technology, and innovation.

Drawing on international academic and professional experience, she works to bridge the country's digital skills gap and strengthen its digital economy.

A strong advocate for women in technology and digital education, Sivhuang believes practical, industry-focused learning is essential to Cambodia's future competitiveness and creating greater opportunities for young Cambodians.

In this interview, Sivhuang discusses women in technology, building Cambodia's digital talent pipeline, expanding access to digital education, leading an innovation-focused education platform, and her advice for the next generation of women pursuing careers in tech.

Women in Cambodia's Tech and Education Sectors

CLR: Cambodia's digital economy and education landscape are evolving rapidly. From your perspective, how are these changes creating new opportunities for Cambodian women in technology, innovation, and leadership?

Cambodia's digital economy is accelerating faster than most people anticipated — and with it, a genuinely new landscape of opportunity is opening up for women. Five years ago, the conversation around women in technology was largely aspirational. Today, it is increasingly real. We are seeing more women entering digital roles, leading technical teams, founding ventures, and shaping policy in ways that were simply not visible a decade ago.

What excites me most is not just the numbers — it is the shift in what feels possible. When young women see other women leading in technology and education, it changes their sense of what they are allowed to want for themselves. That visibility is powerful in ways that are hard to quantify but impossible to overstate.

The expansion of Cambodia's digital economy has also created a practical opening. Industries that once required traditional gatekeeping — finance, marketing, data, software — are now accessible through skills that can be learned and deployed from anywhere.

That democratization of access is one of the most significant opportunities for women in our generation. But opportunity without preparation is just potential. The challenge is making sure women are equipped with the right skills, the right networks, and the right belief in themselves to step into these spaces with confidence. That is what Dichi Academy is built to do.

Building Cambodia's Digital Talent Pipeline

CLR: As demand grows for digital and technology skills across the Kingdom, what do you believe Cambodia still needs to do to better prepare young people for the future workforce?

Cambodia still has significant structural work to do — and we need to be willing to name that clearly rather than celebrate progress prematurely.

Only 10% of university students study ICT, and even among them, fewer than 10% are considered workforce-ready by industry standards. The gap between what our education system produces and what employers actually need is not just wide — it is widening. As long as we are teaching theory that was relevant a decade ago and calling it digital education, we are setting young people up to fail in a market that has moved on.

What Cambodia needs is a fundamental shift in how we design, deliver, and measure education. Curricula must be built with industry — not just approved by academics. Learning models must foster active thinking and problem-solving, not passive absorption of content.

And we must invest in our trainers — because you cannot deliver world-class digital education with educators who have never worked in the industry they are teaching.

Cambodia has the ambition and the government support. What we need now is the courage to redesign the system from the inside out — not just add technology to an old model and call it innovation.

Technology, Education, and Inclusion

CLR: Access to technology and digital education can help create opportunities for students from many different backgrounds. How important is digital education in helping empower the next generation of Cambodian youth, particularly young women?

Digital education is one of the most powerful equalizers available to us today — and I mean that with full conviction, not as a slogan.



A young woman from a provincial town, without access to elite networks or international connections, can develop a skill and compete for opportunities that her geography would otherwise have locked her out of. That is genuinely new. And it is why making digital education accessible, affordable, and relevant is not just an economic priority — it is a social justice issue.

For young women specifically, the stakes are even higher. Many girls grow up internalizing the belief that technology is not for them. Digital education, when designed with inclusion in mind, pushes back against that narrative directly.

When a young woman masters data analytics, builds her first application, or presents a solution to a real business problem, something shifts in her. Her confidence changes. Her sense of what is possible expands. That is not just education — that is transformation.

At Dichi Academy, programs like UP:SKILL — focused specifically on women professionals and digital skills — are not a side initiative. They are central to our mission. Closing the gender gap in digital literacy is one of the highest-return investments Cambodia can make — for its economy, its communities, and its future.

Leading an Education and Innovation Platform

As Founder and Managing Director of DICH Academy, how do you balance innovation, business growth, and long-term educational impact within Cambodia's fast-changing tech ecosystem?

Balancing innovation, growth, and long-term impact is perhaps the defining tension of building Dichi Academy — and I do not think it ever fully resolves. You learn to hold it.

The temptation in a fast-moving tech ecosystem is to chase what is new and call that innovation. But real innovation in education is slower and more human than that. It means asking: does this actually help the learner? Does it produce a measurably better outcome? Those questions anchor us when the market is loud and the pressure to scale is high.

On the business side, sustainability and impact are not in conflict — they are interdependent. A program that changes lives but cannot sustain itself will not change lives for long. So we take revenue seriously, track our margins, and make commercial decisions with the same rigor we bring to curriculum design.

That discipline has allowed us to grow from less than 100 learners in our first year to over 1,500 trained individuals in just one year, and the number keeps growing rapidly — while maintaining the quality that our learners and partners trust us to deliver.

What keeps me grounded through all of it is staying close to the students. When the complexity of running an institution feels overwhelming, I come back to the individual — the learner whose trajectory is changing because of something we built. That clarity of purpose is not a luxury. It is a necessity.

Advice for Future Women Leaders in Tech

What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are interested in building careers in technology, digital entrepreneurship, and innovation?

I want to give advice that is practical, not just inspiring.

Be patient with your learning. The digital economy moves fast and the competition is real — but depth of knowledge will always outlast surface-level speed.

Take the time to develop genuine competency that compounds over time. Mastery is slow. It is also irreplaceable.

Develop your ability to solve problems creatively. The world does not need more people who follow instructions well.

It needs people who can look at a broken system or an unmet need and find a way through that nobody else has tried. Cultivate that instinct and practice it daily.

Let your purpose be louder than your doubt. There will be days when the barriers feel structural and the room feels unwelcoming.

On those days, come back to why you started — the problem you care about and the people you are building for. That clarity is the most durable fuel I know.

Cambodia needs your voice, your ideas, and your leadership. Do not keep us waiting. **CLR**



SOKLY NUOV

TREASURY DIRECTOR - WING BANK



As Treasury Director at Wing Bank, Sokly Nuov plays a key role in managing liquidity, financial markets, and treasury operations for one of Cambodia's leading digital banks. With more than a decade of experience in treasury management and corporate banking, she has helped strengthen the financial foundations supporting the country's rapidly evolving banking sector.

Working at the intersection of strategy, risk management, and financial markets, Sokly has witnessed Cambodia's banking industry become increasingly sophisticated through digital innovation and regional integration. She believes strong treasury leadership is essential to maintaining financial stability while supporting long-term growth.

In this interview, Sokly reflects on the growing role of women in Cambodia's banking sector, the importance of treasury management, emerging trends shaping financial markets, leading through uncertainty, and her advice for the next generation of women pursuing careers in finance.

CLR: Cambodia's banking and financial sector has evolved rapidly over the past decade, with more women stepping into senior leadership positions. From your perspective, how has the role of women in finance and banking leadership changed during this time?

Over the past decade, Cambodia's financial sector has seen a clear shift in how women contribute to leadership, moving from supporting roles into positions that actively shape strategy and decision-making. This is increasingly evident in areas like treasury, risk, and corporate banking, where structured thinking and long-term perspective are essential. There is growing recognition that diverse perspectives strengthen financial institutions, especially in managing complexity and uncertainty. While progress has been meaningful, continuing to build strong leadership pipelines for women will be key to sustaining growth and balance within the sector.

CLR: Treasury operations play a critical role in maintaining liquidity, managing risk, and supporting financial stability. How important is strong treasury leadership within Cambodia's increasingly dynamic banking environment?

As the financial landscape continues to evolve, the role of treasury is shifting beyond operations to become increasingly strategic in maintaining trust and stability within the banking system. This requires strong capabilities in managing liquidity, closely monitoring market movements, and responding effectively to external shocks with both technical expertise and disciplined execution.

A well-managed treasury function ensures that banks are positioned to meet their obligations, support sustainable growth, and navigate periods of volatility with confidence, reinforcing overall institutional resilience.

CLR: Cambodia's financial sector is becoming more sophisticated through digital banking, growing financial services, and greater regional integration. What trends do you believe are shaping the future of treasury management and financial markets in the Kingdom?

Looking at Cambodia's financial landscape today, the pace of transformation is becoming more evident through digital adoption, product diversification, and closer regional linkages. These shifts are gradually reshaping how financial institutions manage liquidity, approach risk, and interact with broader markets.

For treasury, this means adapting to a more integrated and data-driven environment, where responsiveness and visibility are increasingly important. The ability to anticipate trends, leverage technology, and operate across connected markets will define the next phase of development.

CLR: Treasury management often involves fast-moving decision-making and navigating changing market conditions. How do you personally approach leadership, resilience, and strategic thinking within such a high-responsibility role?

Working in treasury requires making timely decisions in environments where conditions can change quickly, often with significant implications.

In such a setting, I focus on maintaining clarity of thought, staying grounded in data, and ensuring decisions remain aligned with broader institutional priorities. Resilience comes from preparation and consistency having strong frameworks, reliable information, and a capable team.

By fostering discipline and accountability, it becomes possible to navigate pressure effectively while maintaining a long-term perspective.

Advice for Future Women Leaders in Finance

CLR: What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are interested in building careers in banking, treasury management, financial markets, or corporate leadership?

Starting a career in finance can feel complex at first, but building strong fundamentals early on makes a meaningful difference over time.

I would encourage young women to focus on developing technical skills, understanding how financial systems operate, and staying open to learning across different areas.

At the same time, growth comes from experience being proactive, taking on challenges, and learning from real situations.

With persistence, confidence, and continuous development, there are strong opportunities to grow into leadership roles and contribute meaningfully to Cambodia's financial sector.

CLR

SOPHEA LUN

CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER - IAAC CAMBODIA



As Chief Commercial Officer of the International Airport Advertising Corporation (IAAC Cambodia), Sophea Lun leads commercial operations across Cambodia's three international airports: Techo International Airport, Siem Reap Angkor International Airport, and Sihanoukville International Airport.

Over a 14-year career spanning the automotive, association, and aviation sectors, she has built a reputation for commercial leadership, business development, and strategic relationship building.

Passionate about collaboration and inclusion, Sophea believes Cambodia's growing connectivity presents significant opportunities for business, investment, and women in leadership.

She also serves on the American Chamber of Commerce Women's Steering Committee, supporting the development of future women leaders.

In this interview, Sophea reflects on Cambodia's expanding aviation sector, the importance of cross-cultural business networks, inclusive leadership, adapting to change, and her advice for the next generation of women leaders.

Cambodia's New Airport and Economic Connectivity

CLR: Cambodia's new international airport projects are expected to play a major role in tourism, investment, and economic connectivity. From your perspective, how important are these developments for Cambodia's long-term growth and international positioning?

Honestly, it is an exciting time to be part of Cambodia's aviation industry. In my current role at IAAC, I have the privilege of working across Cambodia's three international airports, and I see firsthand how connectivity creates opportunities for people, businesses, and communities.

Airports are about much more than moving passengers. They connect Cambodia to global markets, attract investment, support tourism, create jobs, and facilitate trade.

In many ways, an airport is a country's front door. For many visitors, their first and last impression of Cambodia begins there. I believe these developments represent a long-term investment in Cambodia's future and a clear signal that the country is positioning itself as a competitive and connected destination in the region and beyond.

Women and Cross-Cultural Business Networks

CLR: As Cambodia's economy becomes increasingly international, how important is it for women leaders to build networks that bridge both local and international business communities?

Throughout my career, some of the most valuable opportunities and lessons have come from relationships with people from different industries, cultures, and backgrounds.

As Cambodia becomes increasingly connected to the global economy, it is important for women leaders to build networks that extend beyond their immediate professional circles. Strong cross-cultural relationships help us better understand different perspectives, navigate international business environments, and identify opportunities that might otherwise be missed.



One lesson I have learned is that leadership is not only about sharing knowledge. It is equally about listening, learning, and remaining curious. Many of the perspectives that have shaped my career came from conversations with people whose experiences were very different from my own.

For women leaders in Cambodia, the ability to build relationships both locally and internationally will become an increasingly valuable skill as our economy continues to grow and attract global investment.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Leadership

CLR: You have also been active in supporting diversity and inclusion initiatives through the American Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia Women Steering Committee.

Why are diversity and inclusion important for building stronger and more sustainable business communities in Cambodia?

Diversity and inclusion matter because organizations perform better when different perspectives are welcomed and valued.

Through my involvement with the American Chamber of Commerce Women's Steering Committee, I have had the opportunity to connect with many talented women leaders whose experiences challenged my thinking and broadened my perspective.

To me, inclusion goes beyond representation. It is about creating an environment where people feel respected, heard, and confident enough to contribute their ideas.

Some of the best insights often come from voices that are not the loudest in the room.

Organizations that embrace diverse leadership tend to be more innovative, better equipped to understand their customers and stakeholders, and more adaptable during periods of change. Stronger businesses ultimately contribute to stronger communities.

Leadership in a Changing Business Environment

CLR: Cambodia's private sector is evolving rapidly across industries including infrastructure, aviation, tourism, and professional services. How do you personally approach leadership and relationship-building within such a fast-changing environment?

One of the most important lessons I have learned throughout my career is that change is constant. Whether working in the automotive sector, business associations, or now airport advertising, every industry has required continuous learning and adaptation.

In a fast-changing environment, I believe the most important quality a leader can have is adaptability. Markets evolve, customer expectations shift, and new opportunities emerge. Leaders must remain curious, challenge assumptions, and stay open to new ways of thinking.

My approach is grounded in continuous learning and strong relationships. I make it a priority to stay connected to my team, clients, and stakeholders because understanding different perspectives leads to better decisions.



I also believe trust remains one of the most valuable assets in business. Particularly in Cambodia, relationships play a critical role in long-term success. While strategies and technologies may change, trust continues to be the foundation that supports sustainable growth.

Advice for Future Women Leaders

CLR: What advice would you give to young Cambodian women looking to build meaningful careers while also creating strong professional networks both locally and internationally?

My biggest piece of advice is to never underestimate the value of frontline experience. The discipline, resilience, and problem-solving skills you develop early in your career often become your greatest strengths as a leader.

Secondly, don't wait for opportunities to come to you. Be proactive. Attend events, join professional organizations, ask questions, and build meaningful relationships.

Many career opportunities begin with a conversation long before they become a job offer.

And as your career progresses, remember to bring others with you.

True leadership is not measured solely by personal success, but by the opportunities you create for others.

I believe one of the most meaningful ways we can contribute to Cambodia's future is by supporting and encouraging the next generation of women leaders. **CLR**



SOPHOAN PHEAN

NATIONAL DIRECTOR - OXFAM CAMBODIA



As National Director of Oxfam in Cambodia, Sophoan Phean leads one of the country's leading development organisations, working to advance gender equality, economic inclusion, climate resilience, and social justice.

With nearly two decades of experience across Cambodia and the Southeast Asia region, she has worked closely with communities, civil society, and policymakers to promote more inclusive and sustainable development.

Sophoan believes women's empowerment is fundamental to Cambodia's long-term economic and social progress. Through her work, she continues to champion greater opportunities for women, stronger community resilience, and more inclusive economic growth.

In this interview, Sophoan reflects on women's empowerment, supporting Cambodia's informal economy, building more inclusive economic opportunities, and her advice for the next generation of women leaders.

Empowering Women Through Development

CLR: Oxfam has long worked on issues surrounding economic inclusion, social development, and empowerment. From your perspective, how important is women's empowerment to Cambodia's long-term social and economic progress?

Cambodia has made significant strides in economic growth and poverty reduction over the last two decades. Yet, the question of who benefits from this progress remains critical.

From Oxfam's perspective, women's empowerment is not only a moral imperative; it is a strategic necessity for Cambodia's long-term social and economic development.

Across all areas of our work including economic justice, gender equality, climate resilience, and governance, we consistently see that when women are empowered, entire communities and systems transform for the better.

Women's empowerment is central to Cambodia's future because it directly influences economic productivity, social well-being, and equality.

Women represent a substantial share of the labor force, particularly in agriculture, the garment sector, and informal businesses.

However, their contributions are often undervalued and constrained by structural inequalities.

At Oxfam, we view empowerment as multi-dimensional. It is not only about increasing income but also about strengthening agency, voice, and rights. When women gain access to resources such as land, finance, skills, and decent work, they reinvest in their families and communities. Evidence from our programs consistently shows improvements in children's education, health outcomes, and household resilience when women control more resources.

Moreover, empowerment is essential to achieving gender justice. Deep-rooted norms and inequalities still limit women's participation in decision-making, both at the household and public levels. Addressing these challenges requires deliberate efforts to transform systems and attitudes, not just individual opportunities.

In Cambodia's context of economic transition and increasing climate vulnerability, empowering women becomes even more crucial. Women are often frontline responders to shocks whether economic crises, floods, or droughts. Strengthening their resilience and leadership capacity is vital for sustainable development. Ultimately, a Cambodia that invests in women is investing in a more equitable, resilient, and prosperous future.

Supporting Women in the Informal Sector

CLR: Many Cambodian women continue to work within the informal economy, including small trade, agriculture, and community-based businesses. What are some of the biggest challenges these women still face today, and what more can be done to support them?

A large proportion of Cambodian women work in the informal economy, whether as smallholder farmers, street vendors, home-based workers, or micro-entrepreneurs. While this sector provides essential livelihoods, it is also characterized by precarity, low income, and limited protections.

One of the biggest challenges is lack of social protection. Informal workers often do not have access to health insurance, paid leave including maternity leave, or safety nets during economic shocks. This became evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many women lost incomes overnight without sufficient support.

Another critical barrier is limited access to technology, finance and markets. Women often lack collateral, formal financial records, or connections needed to access credit or expand their businesses. In agricultural value chains, they may also face unequal access to inputs, technology, and market information.

Time poverty is another significant issue. Women carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work—caring for children, the elderly, and managing household responsibilities—which restricts their ability to engage fully in economic activities or pursue leadership roles.

Additionally, gender norms and limited decision-making power can restrict women's mobility, confidence, and influence in economic and community spaces.

To address these challenges, we need coordinated action.

We must also invest in skills development and market linkages to help women move up value chains and unlock new opportunities. At the same time, we cannot ignore the heavy burden of unpaid care which can be achieved through community services, childcare infrastructure, and policy reforms that promote shared care responsibilities. And finally, we must support women's collective action through cooperatives and associations because when women join forces, they gain bargaining power, they amplify their voices and they drive lasting change.

Oxfam has seen success in supporting women-led savings groups, farmer networks, and small enterprises. These initiatives not only improve incomes but also strengthen solidarity and confidence among women.

Building Inclusive Economic Opportunities

CLR: As Cambodia's economy continues to modernise, how can development organisations, businesses, and policymakers work together to ensure women are not left behind in the country's economic transformation?

As Cambodia's economy modernizes—through industrial diversification, digitalization, and integration into global markets—there is both opportunity and risk. Without intentional action, women could be left behind in this transformation.

Ensuring inclusive economic growth requires collaboration across all sectors. Development organizations, like Oxfam, play a catalytic role.

We pilot innovative approaches, support community-based solutions, and advocate for inclusive policies. Our focus is clear promoting fair value chains where women producers and workers receive equitable benefits, supporting women's entrepreneurship and leadership, and generating evidence that influences policy and practice so women can fully realize their potential as agents of change.

The private sector is equally vital. Businesses are drivers of economic transformation, and they carry both responsibility and opportunity. By ensuring fair wages and safe working conditions, investing in skills training and career advancement for women, and embedding gender-sensitive policies across operations and supply chains, companies can make a difference.



Inclusive business models are not only ethical, they are profitable, creating resilient supply chains and a more productive workforce.

Government leadership is essential to create an enabling environment. Policymakers must enforce labor rights and gender equality regulations, expand social protection coverage, and invest in education, digital infrastructure, and rural development. Just as importantly, they must promote women's participation in economic policymaking.

A critical frontier for future growth is the digital economy. Women must have equal access to digital skills, tools, and opportunities, otherwise, we risk creating a new form of inequality.

Ultimately, inclusive economic transformation depends on aligning efforts across all stakeholders. Together, we can ensure that women are not only participants, but leaders, in Cambodia's growth story.

Leadership and Social Impact

CLR: As Country Director of Oxfam in Cambodia, how do you approach leadership while balancing advocacy, community impact, and long-term development priorities?

As a National Director of Oxfam in Cambodia, leadership is about balancing vision, partnership, and accountability. It requires navigating complex challenges while remaining grounded in the realities and voices of the communities we serve. My approach is guided by several key principles including effective leadership, values drive-decision making, investing in partnership, and long-term vision.

Effective leadership begins with listening to communities, partners, staff, and stakeholders.

Development is not about imposing solutions but about co-creating them with those most affected. Oxfam's values—equality, accountability, empowerment, and solidarity—guide our work. This means prioritizing the rights of marginalized groups, especially women, and ensuring our actions reflect these principles.

Change cannot be achieved alone so we work closely with local civil society, women-led groups, government institutions, private sector actors, and development partners placing local leadership and ownership at the center of all interventions.

Strong partnerships enhance both impact and sustainability.

While addressing immediate needs is critical, we must also focus on long-term transformation by tackling systemic inequalities, building resilience, and strengthening institutions.

By strengthening the capacity and voice of our partners and co-creating solutions grounded in community realities, Oxfam ensures its work remains relevant, inclusive, and sustainable, contributing to systemic change that benefits the most vulnerable, especially women and marginalized communities.

"Leadership in this context is not about authority—it is about facilitating collective impact, nurturing innovation, and remaining accountable to the communities we serve."

CLR; What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who want to create positive social impact through leadership, development work, or community engagement?

To young Cambodian women aspiring to create positive social impact: you are the architects of your own future and that of our country. The foundation begins with the right mindset. Here are a few guiding reflections:

First, believe in your voice and your potential. Cambodia's future depends on the leadership and ideas of its young people, and women have a critical role in shaping that future.

Second, invest in your education and skills. Whether through formal education or community learning, building knowledge and capabilities will open opportunities and strengthen your impact.

Third, engage actively with your community. Change often begins at the local level. By understanding community needs and working collectively, you can create meaningful and lasting impact.

Fourth, seek out networks and mentorship. Surround yourself with peers, mentors, and organisations that support your growth and share your values. Collaboration is essential to overcoming challenges.

Fifth, be courageous in challenging inequality. Progress requires questioning norms and advocating for fairness and justice. Your voice matters in addressing issues such as gender inequality, climate change, and social inclusion.

Finally, remember that leadership is not defined by position—it is demonstrated through action and influence. Whether you are a student, entrepreneur, activist, or professional, you have the power to contribute to positive change.

At Oxfam, we have seen many inspiring examples of young Cambodian women leading initiatives, driving innovation, and uplifting others. Their leadership gives us great hope for the future. Women's empowerment lies at the heart of Cambodia's journey toward inclusive and sustainable development. From strengthening the informal economy to shaping national policies and leading community transformation, women are key agents of change. However, achieving true empowerment requires collective effort, sustained commitment, and systemic change. By working together—across communities, organisations, businesses, and government—we can ensure that Cambodia's development is not only rapid but also equitable and just.

“Empowering women is not just about fairness—it is about unlocking the full potential of Cambodia as a nation”. **CLR**





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SREY OEUN CHEM

HEAD OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS - SMART AXIATA



Srey Oeun Chem is the Head of Corporate Affairs at Smart Axiata, where she leads corporate communications, public affairs, sustainability, and stakeholder engagement for one of Cambodia's leading telecommunications companies.

Through her work, she has helped advance digital inclusion, innovation, and community development across the Kingdom.

A strong advocate for empowering women and young people through technology, Srey Oeun believes digital connectivity is creating new opportunities for education, entrepreneurship, and economic participation. She is passionate about fostering inclusive leadership and helping more women succeed in Cambodia's growing digital economy.

In this edition of 50 Khmer Women Voices 2026, Srey Oeun reflects on the evolving role of women in telecommunications, the importance of digital inclusion, and why she believes the next generation of women leaders will help shape Cambodia's digital future.

Women in Cambodia's Telecommunications Industry.

Women in Cambodia's Telecommunications Industry Telecommunications has traditionally been a male-dominated industry in many parts of the world. From your perspective, how have opportunities for women within Cambodia's telecom and technology sectors evolved over the past decade?

Over the past decade, I have witnessed remarkable progress in opportunities for women within Cambodia's telecom and technology sectors. What was once a male-dominated industry is now opening doors for women to step into leadership roles and actively shape strategic decision-making.

At Smart, for example, 40% of our senior leadership team are women, including a Cambodian woman serving at the Chief level as Chief People Officer. These leaders are not only driving innovations but also steering the company's digital transformation journey.

This evolution has been made possible through greater access to education, mentorship, and a growing recognition that diverse perspectives strengthen both business outcomes and national development.

Women are no longer simply participants in the sector—they are now influential voices, decision-makers, and catalysts shaping Cambodia's digital future.

Connectivity and Opportunity

Connectivity and Opportunity As digital connectivity becomes increasingly important for education, business, and daily life, what role do telecommunications companies play in creating more opportunities for Cambodian women and young people?

As digital connectivity becomes increasingly essential for education, business, and daily life, telecommunications companies play a transformative role in creating opportunities for Cambodian women and young people.

By expanding affordable and reliable access, they open doors to education, skills training, and online resources that were once out of reach.

This connectivity empowers women to pursue remote work, engage in e-commerce and social commerce, and participate fully in the digital economy, while young people gain exposure to global knowledge and innovation.



One example that stands out to me is a woman I met in Battambang province. With a passion for hairstyling, she dreamed of opening a small salon.

Through digital connectivity, she was able to study new techniques and trending hairstyles on YouTube.

When customers visited her salon, she could offer the latest styles, elevating her business and proving how access to technology can transform local entrepreneurship.

This is the true power of connectivity.

Beyond infrastructure, telecom companies also serve as ecosystem builders—collaborating with schools, NGOs, and government to deliver digital literacy programs, promote digital resilience and safety, and provide mentorship and entrepreneurship support.

These initiatives enable women and youth not only to consume technology but also to create with it, fostering innovation, leadership, and resilience.

In essence, telecommunications companies are far more than service providers; they have become enablers of inclusion, empowerment, and long-term socio-economic growth.

By opening pathways to education, entrepreneurship, and digital participation, they ensure that Cambodian women and young people can play a central role in shaping the nation's future.

Technology and Entrepreneurship

Technology and Entrepreneurship Technology is helping reduce barriers for entrepreneurs by providing access to information, customers, digital payments, and online marketplaces.

How important is digital connectivity in supporting Cambodia's growing startup ecosystem and women entrepreneurs?

Digital connectivity is a critical enabler of Cambodia's growing startup ecosystem and a powerful driver of women's entrepreneurship.

It provides the foundation for accessing markets, customers, and investors, while enabling digital payments, e-commerce, and social commerce platforms that allow businesses to scale rapidly.

For women in particular, connectivity helps overcome traditional barriers to capital, networks, and mobility—creating a more level playing field for participation and growth.

Beyond market access, connectivity also unlocks knowledge and mentorship. Women entrepreneurs can acquire new skills, explore innovative business models, and connect with peers, mentors, and investors through digital platforms.

This democratization of information ensures that success is increasingly driven by talent and creativity, rather than geography or gender.

Equally important, digital infrastructure enhances resilience. Startups can adapt quickly to changing market conditions, while women entrepreneurs can diversify income streams and build more sustainable businesses.

For example, one entrepreneur supported by Smart Startup Space—a local fried banana chip vendor who previously relied on walk-in customers—can now expand her reach through platforms such as GrabFood, accessing a much broader customer base and increasing her income potential.

With the support of technology, she is also able to evolve her business into a more formal FMCG product, with proper packaging for retail distribution in supermarkets and potential for future export.

In this way, connectivity is not merely a technical enabler; it is a catalyst for innovation, inclusion, and long-term economic growth.

By democratizing access to opportunities, digital connectivity ensures that Cambodia's startup ecosystem remains dynamic, inclusive, and future-ready—empowering women entrepreneurs to lead, innovate, and contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress.



ESG and Sustainable Growth

ESG and Sustainable Growth As businesses place greater emphasis on ESG commitments, how is Smart Axiata approaching areas such as digital inclusion, environmental responsibility, and community development, and why are these priorities important for Cambodia's future?

At Smart Axiata, ESG is not a standalone agenda—it is fully embedded in how we drive long-term business growth and contribute to national development. Our approach is structured around four key pillars: **Advancing Digital Society, Advancing Green Economy, Advancing People and Communities, and Driving Governance and Risk**—all of which are critical to Cambodia's sustainable future.

On **Advancing Digital Society (digital inclusion)**, we believe connectivity is a fundamental enabler of opportunity. Through initiatives focused on youth, and in partnership with schools, universities, and communities, we are equipping young people—especially women and underserved groups—with the digital skills needed to participate safely, responsibly, and confidently in the digital economy. This includes a strong emphasis on **digital safety, cyber awareness, and online resilience**, ensuring individuals can navigate risks and protect themselves in an increasingly connected world.

On the **Advancing Green Economy (environmental)**, we are taking concrete steps to reduce our footprint, from improving energy efficiency across our network to advancing responsible e-waste management practices.

As Cambodia continues to grow, balancing digital expansion with environmental stewardship will be key to ensuring long-term, sustainable progress.

Equally important is our commitment to **people, communities, and entrepreneurship**. Through platforms like Smart Startup Space, we support local innovators and women entrepreneurs by providing access to mentorship, networks, and digital tools. This helps foster a more inclusive and resilient startup ecosystem, where innovation can thrive across all segments of society. In parallel, through our **Relief and Recovery Project**, we provide timely support to communities and small businesses affected by crises—helping them recover, rebuild, and sustain their livelihoods. This combination of long-term empowerment and responsive support strengthens community resilience and ensures that no one is left behind in Cambodia's digital and economic progress.

Finally, strong **governance and risk management** underpin everything we do. We are committed to upholding the highest standards of transparency, ethics, and corporate accountability—ensuring responsible decision-making, robust risk management, and compliance across our operations. This builds trust with our stakeholders and reinforces the integrity of our ESG commitments.

Ultimately, these priorities matter because Cambodia is at a pivotal stage of its development. By advancing inclusive digital access, responsible environmental practices, empowered communities, and strong governance, we are helping shape a future that is not only more connected, but also more equitable, resilient, and sustainable for generations to come.

Inspiring the Next Generation of Women Leaders

Inspiring the Next Generation of Women Leaders What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are interested in pursuing careers in telecommunications, technology, entrepreneurship, or corporate leadership?

I strongly believe that every young Cambodian woman has the potential to lead, innovate, and shape our country's future—you just need the courage to believe in yourself and take that first step.

Do not let traditional or social expectations define your path. Your ambition, your resilience, and your willingness to learn will take you much further than you imagine.

For me, continuous learning is fundamental. The world of technology and business is evolving rapidly, and staying curious—while building strong digital skills—is essential. Those who are open to change and proactively invest in themselves will always create new opportunities.

I also believe deeply in the power of connection and community. No one succeeds alone. Seeking mentors, learning from role models, and surrounding yourself with supportive networks can accelerate your journey and build your confidence.

And as you grow, it is equally important to give back and lift others up—because true leadership is about creating impact beyond yourself. At the same time, I encourage young women to embrace challenges and step outside their comfort zone.

Leadership is not about being perfect—it is about having the courage to try, to take calculated risks, and to keep moving forward even when the path is uncertain. Many of my own growth moments came from navigating challenges and learning through experience.

Most importantly, always remember that your voice matters. Women have a critical role to play in shaping Cambodia's digital and economic future. Whether in telecommunications, technology, entrepreneurship, or corporate leadership, you have the ability to drive innovation, create meaningful impact, and inspire others.

Ultimately, I believe growth comes from both personal commitment and the environment around us—requiring the courage to keep learning, supported by opportunities that enable success. That is why I believe in creating ecosystems where young women can thrive, lead, and succeed, and that the future belongs to those bold enough to step forward and shape it—for themselves and for Cambodia. **CLR**



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SREYPOCH HENG

TREASURY DIRECTOR - WING BANK



As Compliance Director at Wing Bank, Sreypoch Heng plays a key role in strengthening governance, regulatory compliance, and risk management within one of Cambodia's leading digital banks.

With more than 16 years of experience, she has helped guide organisations through transformation, regulatory change, and continued growth.

Sreypoch believes strong governance and financial inclusion go hand in hand in building a more resilient banking sector. She is also passionate about creating greater opportunities for women through leadership, entrepreneurship, and partnerships that strengthen communities across Cambodia.

In this interview, Sreypoch reflects on the importance of women's empowerment, financial inclusion, leadership in a rapidly evolving banking sector, and her advice for the next generation of women leaders.

CLR: Women Driving Cambodia's Future

Across Cambodia, women are increasingly becoming key drivers of business, technology, and entrepreneurship. From your perspective, how important is women's empowerment to Cambodia's long-term economic and social development?

From my perspective, women's empowerment is fundamental to Cambodia's long-term development, both economically and socially. As more women step into roles across business, finance, and technology, they are not only contributing to growth but also strengthening governance and decision-making within organizations.

At the same time, empowerment goes beyond participation. It is about creating enabling environments where women can lead, influence outcomes, and build sustainable impact. Over time, this contributes to stronger institutions and a more inclusive and resilient economy.

CLR: Supporting Women Entrepreneurs

Through Partnership Wing Bank has partnered with organisations such as the Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association and Cambodian Children's Fund to support women and communities across Cambodia. Why are partnerships like these important in creating more opportunities for women entrepreneurs and future leaders?

Partnerships play a critical role in creating more opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

While access to finance is important, many women also need mentorship, skills development, and strong networks to grow their businesses effectively.

By working with organizations such as the Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association and Cambodian Children's Fund, we are able to support women more holistically and across different stages of their journey.

I believe these collaborations help bridge gaps from starting a business to scaling it, while also creating space for women to learn, connect, and build confidence. In the long run, this contributes to a stronger pipeline of capable women leaders.

Financial Inclusion and Digital Access

CLR: Financial Inclusion and Digital Access
Digital banking and financial technology are helping expand access to financial services across the country.

How important is financial inclusion in supporting women-owned SMEs and helping more women participate in Cambodia's growing economy?

Financial inclusion is essential for enabling more women, especially those leading small and growing businesses to participate fully in the economy, and as digital banking expands.

It is steadily reducing access barriers and equipping women with the tools to manage finances confidently, scale their businesses, and contribute more actively to Cambodia's economic growth.

CLR: Leadership and Compliance in Banking
As Compliance Director at Wing Bank, how do you approach leadership within a banking sector that is becoming increasingly digital, regulated, and fast-moving?

Leadership in today's fast-evolving and highly regulated banking environment requires balancing innovation with strong governance, and my approach is to position compliance not just as a control function but as an enabler of sustainable growth by embedding accountability and risk awareness into everyday operations while ensuring frameworks remain practical, adaptable, and aligned with ongoing digital transformation to maintain trust and integrity.

Advice for the Next Generation

CLR: Advice for the Next Generation
What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are looking to build careers in banking, compliance, business leadership, or entrepreneurship?

Young Cambodian women at the beginning of their careers should focus on building strong foundational skills while staying open to different paths and opportunities. Early on, it is important to stay curious, explore various experiences, and be willing to step outside of one's comfort zone to grow both personally and professionally.

Challenges are part of any journey, but they help build confidence, resilience, and perspective over time. With consistency, discipline, and a positive mindset, there are many opportunities to develop into leadership roles and contribute meaningfully to Cambodia's future. **CLR**

THYDA THAUNG

FOUNDER - THAUNG ENTERPRISE



As Founder of Thaung Enterprise, Thaung Thyda is helping bring one of Cambodia's oldest traditions to modern consumers through a brand built around natural Kampot sea salt. Inspired by her family's salt farming heritage, she has combined traditional production methods with contemporary branding to showcase the quality and authenticity of Cambodian-made products.

Passionate about sustainable agriculture, local entrepreneurship, and community development, Thyda believes Cambodian products can compete confidently on the international stage while preserving their cultural identity. Through Thaung Enterprise, she continues to support local producers while promoting innovation across Cambodia's growing SME sector.

In this interview, Thyda reflects on building a Cambodian brand, empowering women entrepreneurs, promoting locally made products internationally, balancing tradition with modern business, and her advice for the next generation of women founders.

Building a Cambodian Brand

CLR: What first inspired you to launch Thaung Enterprise, and why was it important for you to focus on promoting Cambodian-made natural salt products from Kampot?

Launching Thaung Enterprise came from a strong belief that Cambodian products deserve greater recognition and value. Growing up in a small village on an island- surrounded with sea and salt farms, I saw many natural and traditional Cambodian products that carried deep cultural identity and excellent quality, yet they often lacked modern branding and international visibility. I wanted to help change that perception by building a Cambodian brand that could proudly represent quality, authenticity, and local heritage. My inspiration particularly came from Cambodia's traditional salt farming communities in Kampot included my family.

My parents worked incredibly hard throughout their lives in the salt farm, often making sacrifices and enduring difficult conditions to give me access to pursue higher education. Salt may appear to be a simple product, but behind it is generations of knowledge, hard work, and connection to nature. Kampot's coastal environment, mineral-rich seawater, and traditional harvesting methods create a product that is unique to Cambodia. However, many people, especially outside the country, did not fully understand the value of Cambodian natural sea salt.

With opportunity I have been receiving included my education, I decided to focus on natural salt because it represents both tradition and sustainability. Cambodian salt farmers rely heavily on natural sunlight, seawater evaporation, and manual harvesting methods that have been passed down through generations. I wanted to preserve that story while also presenting it in a modern way that could connect with today's consumers.

Thaung Enterprise was built not only to sell products but also to create awareness about Cambodian-made goods. I believe Cambodia has tremendous potential in agriculture, natural food products, and sustainable local industries. Through branding, education, and quality improvement, Cambodian products can compete confidently in both local and international markets.

Another important motivation was supporting local communities. When consumers buy locally made products, they are also supporting farmers, producers, and families who work hard to preserve traditional industries. I believe businesses should create long-term value for communities, not only financial profit.

At the same time, building a Cambodian brand requires consistency and patience. Consumers today care about quality, transparency, sustainability, and authenticity. We therefore focus on maintaining product quality through sustainable practice, improving packaging, and educating consumers about the benefits of natural sea salt and traditional Cambodian production methods.

I also believe Cambodian entrepreneurs should not feel pressured to imitate foreign brands. Instead, we should focus on telling authentic Cambodian stories in a professional and modern way. International consumers increasingly value products that carry real cultural identity and traceable origins.

Ultimately, Thaung Enterprise represents more than a business. It reflects pride in Cambodian heritage and belief in Cambodia's future potential. My goal is to help create stronger recognition for Cambodian-made products while contributing to the growth of local entrepreneurship and sustainable industries.

Women and Entrepreneurship in Cambodia

CIR: As a young female entrepreneur, what challenges and opportunities have you experienced while building a business in Cambodia's growing startup and SME landscape?

As a young female entrepreneur, building a business in Cambodia has been both challenging and rewarding. Entrepreneurship requires resilience, adaptability, and continuous learning, especially when starting from limited resources. One of the biggest challenges for young women entrepreneurs is gaining credibility and trust in competitive business environments.

In many industries, women are still expected to prove themselves more strongly before being fully recognized as leaders. There can also be social expectations that discourage women from taking risks or pursuing ambitious business goals.

However, I believe these challenges are slowly changing as more Cambodian women step into leadership roles across business, education, and social enterprises.

At the same time, Cambodia's growing startup and SME ecosystem is creating exciting opportunities. More young people are becoming interested in entrepreneurship, innovation, and local product development. Digital platforms and social media also allow small businesses to reach larger audiences without requiring massive investments.

For women entrepreneurs, one important strength is adaptability. Women often bring strong communication skills, creativity, and community-centered leadership into business. These qualities are increasingly valuable in modern markets where consumers care about authenticity, trust, and social impact.



Personally, I have learned that entrepreneurship is not simply about profit or business growth. It is also about problem-solving, creating opportunities, and building long-term impact. Every challenge becomes part of the learning process. Whether facing financial difficulties, operational issues, or market competition, resilience is essential.

Another challenge for SMEs in Cambodia is access to resources, including financing, technical support, and international market knowledge. Many small businesses have strong products but struggle with branding, packaging, certifications, or export readiness. This is why collaboration between entrepreneurs, government institutions, and development organizations is important to strengthen Cambodia's local business ecosystem. Fortunately, there is growing support for women-led businesses in Cambodia. More organizations are promoting women's entrepreneurship, leadership training, and small business development. This creates greater confidence for younger generations of women to pursue entrepreneurship.

I also believe representation matters. When young women see other Cambodian women building successful businesses, it encourages them to believe that their own ideas and ambitions are possible. Entrepreneurship can empower women not only economically but also socially by increasing confidence, independence, and leadership opportunities.

For me, being a female entrepreneur means balancing determination with responsibility. It means creating value while remaining connected to community and culture.

I hope more Cambodian women will continue entering business and contributing to Cambodia's economic development through innovation, creativity, and leadership.

Promoting Cambodian Products Internationally

CLR: Cambodia is producing more high-quality local products with export potential. What opportunities do you see for Cambodian-made products to grow both locally and in international markets?

Cambodia has enormous potential to grow as a producer of high-quality local products with international appeal. Around the world, consumers are increasingly searching for products that are authentic, naturally sourced, sustainable, and connected to real communities. Cambodia already possesses many products that meet these expectations.

Products such as Kampot sea salt, Kampot pepper, palm sugar, wild honey, rice, cashew nut, and other agricultural goods carry unique regional identity and cultural value.

These products are not only ingredients; they represent Cambodia's geography, traditions, and local craftsmanship.

One major opportunity for Cambodian-made products is the growing global demand for traceable and premium food products. Consumers today want to know where products come from and how they are produced. Cambodian products often have strong stories behind them, including traditional harvesting methods and natural production processes.

However, improving product quality alone is not enough. Branding, packaging, consistency, and international marketing are equally important. Many Cambodian products have excellent quality but remain under-recognized because they lack strong brand positioning. To compete globally, Cambodian businesses must invest in professional presentation, certifications, quality control, and customer education.

Digital technology also creates new opportunities for local businesses. Social media and e-commerce platforms allow Cambodian entrepreneurs to share their stories directly with international consumers. In the past, global market access was mostly limited to large companies. Today, even small businesses can build international visibility through online platforms.

Another important opportunity is the increasing interest in ethical and sustainable products. Cambodia's traditional agricultural systems are often naturally aligned with sustainability because they rely heavily on manual labor, local knowledge, and natural resources. This creates potential for Cambodian brands to position themselves within premium and environmentally conscious markets.

At the same time, Cambodia must continue strengthening production standards, food safety systems, and export capacity. International buyers expect reliability and consistency. Supporting SMEs with training, technical assistance, and export readiness programs can help Cambodian businesses become more competitive. I also believe Cambodian products should focus on preserving authenticity rather than trying to imitate foreign products.

Cambodia's strength lies in its uniqueness. International consumers are often interested in products with real cultural stories and local identity.

Promoting Cambodian-made products internationally is not only beneficial for businesses; it also supports local farmers, preserves traditional industries, and strengthens national pride. When Cambodian products succeed globally, they help create a stronger image of Cambodia as a country capable of producing high-quality and meaningful products.

Looking ahead, I believe Cambodia has the potential to become more recognized for premium agricultural and natural products. With stronger collaboration between entrepreneurs, producers, and institutions, Cambodian-made products can continue expanding into larger international markets while preserving their cultural roots.

Balancing Tradition and Modern Business

CLR: Your business is rooted in a traditional Cambodian product while also targeting modern consumers and export markets. How do you balance preserving local identity with building a competitive modern brand?

One of the most important aspects of building Thaung Enterprise is finding the right balance between traditional Cambodian identity and the demands of modern business. For me, tradition and innovation are not opposites; rather, they complement each other. In fact, preserving authenticity can become one of the strongest advantages in today's competitive global market.

Our products are rooted in traditional Cambodian salt farming practices that have been passed down for generations. These methods rely on natural sunlight, seawater evaporation, and manual harvesting techniques. They are deeply connected to Cambodia's coastal culture and agricultural heritage, reflecting both history and community knowledge. At the same time, modern consumers expect high standards in quality, packaging, food safety, and branding. This means we must continuously improve how Cambodian products are presented and positioned, while still respecting their traditional origins.

One of the key ways we achieve this balance is through storytelling. We do not hide tradition or replace it; we translate it into a form that modern consumers can understand and appreciate. The real balance comes from clearly distinguishing what must be preserved and what can evolve. The methods, sourcing, and craftsmanship remain rooted in tradition, while presentation, distribution, and communication adapt to modern markets.

Inspiring the Next Generation of Women Founders

CLR: What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are thinking about starting their own business or launching locally-made products onto larger markets?

My advice to young Cambodian women is to believe in the value of your ideas and not wait for the "perfect moment" to begin. Entrepreneurship is a journey of learning, and many successful businesses start with limited resources but a strong sense of purpose.

Cambodia has many unique products, traditions, and local resources that have tremendous potential. Rather than looking elsewhere for inspiration, I encourage young women to look at the strengths within their own communities. Some of the best business opportunities come from preserving and improving what already makes Cambodia special.

At the same time, it is important to invest in continuous learning. Building a business today requires more than having a good product. Entrepreneurs need to understand branding, marketing, digital technology, customer engagement, and quality management. Every challenge becomes an opportunity to grow and improve.

For those who want to bring Cambodian-made products to larger markets, my advice is to focus on authenticity and quality. International consumers are increasingly interested in products with real stories, clear origins, and cultural identity.

Cambodian entrepreneurs should not feel pressured to imitate foreign brands. Instead, we should proudly share our own stories while presenting our products professionally and consistently.

I also encourage young women to be confident in their abilities. Women bring valuable strengths to entrepreneurship, including creativity, adaptability, communication, and community-centered leadership. The more women step into business and leadership roles, the more they inspire future generations to do the same.

Most importantly, remember that success does not happen overnight. Building a business requires patience, resilience, and persistence. Stay committed to your vision, continue learning, and do not be afraid of setbacks. Every challenge is part of the journey. I believe the next generation of Cambodian women entrepreneurs has the potential to create innovative businesses, strengthen local communities, and bring Cambodian products to the world stage. **CLR**



TIVEA CHANTY

CEO - ADVANCED RESIDENCE & PROPERTY CO., LTD.



As Chief Executive Officer of ADVANCED Residence & Property Co., Ltd., Tivea Chanty leads one of Cambodia's growing real estate firms, delivering residential, commercial, and mixed-use property solutions across the Kingdom. Under her leadership, the company has expanded rapidly while building a workplace where women hold the majority of leadership positions.

Passionate about professionalism, trust, and developing future talent, Tivea believes Cambodia's real estate sector will be driven by stronger industry standards, ethical leadership, and greater opportunities for women to lead. Through her work, she continues to champion a people-first culture built on integrity and continuous learning.

In this interview, Tivea reflects on women in Cambodia's real estate industry, building a female-led leadership culture, strengthening professionalism and trust, developing future talent, and the opportunities shaping the sector's future.

Women Leading Cambodia's Real Estate Industry

CLR: You have built a successful career in one of Cambodia's most competitive industries. From your perspective, how have opportunities for women in real estate leadership evolved, and what factors have contributed to their success?

From my perspective, the opportunities for women in Cambodia's real estate sector have evolved remarkably over the past decade. What was once a male-dominated industry has become increasingly inclusive, with many women now leading as CEOs, founders, managers, and top-performing sales professionals. This transformation has been driven by several key factors:

-First, the rapid growth of the industry itself has created more space for talent, regardless of gender.

-Second, real estate rewards performance, communication skills, trust, and relationship-building areas where many women excel.

-Finally, the mindset in Cambodian society is changing. Women today are more empowered to pursue careers, build financial independence, and lead organizations. We are also seeing strong peer inspiration, where successful women leaders motivate the next generation to step into leadership roles.

Building a Female-Led Leadership Culture

CLR: ADVANCED Residence & Property has created a workplace where more than 60% of leadership roles are held by women. Why has investing in female leadership been important to the company's growth and culture?

In our company, investing in female leadership has been a strategic decision, not just a social one. When more than 60% of leadership roles are held by women, it reflects our belief in inclusivity, capability, and long-term sustainability.

Women leaders bring a unique combination of empathy, discipline, trust, resilience, and strong client relationship management qualities that are critical in real estate. This has helped us build a culture that is collaborative rather than purely competitive, and results-driven while still being people-centered. Ultimately, this diversity has become one of our company's strongest competitive advantages.

Trust and Professionalism in Real Estate

CLR: The real estate sector relies heavily on trust, transparency, and long-term relationships. How important are these values in building confidence among buyers, investors, and clients in Cambodia's property market?

Trust and professionalism are the foundation of the real estate industry, especially in a market like Cambodia, where many buyers and investors rely heavily on relationships and reputation. In fact, strengthening transparency and professionalism is a national priority, with regulatory frameworks increasingly focused on improving investor confidence and ensuring fair practices.

For us as a company, trust is not just a value; it is a business strategy. Every transaction we manage must be clear, ethical, and aligned with long-term client interests. When clients trust you, they return, they refer others, and they invest more confidently.



In a growing market, reputation travels fast. Companies that prioritize transparency and professionalism will always outperform those focused only on short-term gains.

Developing the Next Generation of Talent

CLR: Your company places a strong focus on training and professional development.

What can businesses do to better prepare young Cambodians, particularly young women, for leadership positions in the future?

Preparing the next generation, especially young Cambodians and young women, for leadership requires a structured and intentional approach.

-First, companies must invest in continuous training and mentorship programs. Real estate is not just about sales; it requires knowledge of law, finance, negotiation, and market analysis.

-Second, we need to create real career pathways, where young professionals can clearly see how to progress from entry-level roles to leadership positions.

-Third, exposure is critical. Giving young staff opportunities to lead projects, manage clients, and participate in decision-making builds confidence and capability.

-Finally, businesses must promote a culture that values merit, ethics, and continuous learning, ensuring that leadership is based on performance and integrity not background or connections.

CLR: Looking ahead, what opportunities do you see for Cambodia's real estate industry, and what role can women leaders play in helping shape the sector's future development?

Looking ahead, Cambodia's real estate industry remains full of opportunity. The country continues to attract investors due to its economic growth, urbanization, infrastructure expansion, and relatively accessible property market.

We are seeing strong potential across multiple segments residential developments, commercial real estate, mixed-use projects, and emerging areas driven by infrastructure expansion and tourism recovery. Women leaders have a critical role to play in shaping the future of this industry.

They bring a long-term, relationship-focused mindset that is essential for sustainable growth. Going forward, I believe women will continue to lead in areas such as:

Building trust-driven client networks.

-Enhancing professionalism and ethical standards.

-Driving innovation in sales, marketing, and customer experience.

-Mentoring and developing future leaders. Ultimately, the future of Cambodia's real estate sector will not be defined by gender but by leadership quality. And I believe women will be at the forefront of that transformation. **CLR**

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VATEY SOTHA

GENERAL MANAGER - REALESTATE.COM.KH



As General Manager of Realestate.com.kh, Vatey Mom leads one of Cambodia's leading property platforms, helping connect buyers, investors, and developers through trusted market information and professional real estate services.

With more than a decade of experience in property sales and investment advisory, she has witnessed the rapid evolution of Cambodia's real estate sector.

Vatey believes the future of the industry will be shaped by stronger professionalism, greater transparency, and better access to reliable market information. She is also passionate about creating more opportunities for women to build successful careers across the property sector.

In this interview, Vatey reflects on the growing role of women in real estate, the evolution of Cambodia's property market, building trust through transparency and professionalism, and her advice for the next generation of women entering the industry.

Women Leading Cambodia's Real Estate Sales Industry.

CLR: Cambodia's real estate sales industry is increasingly being led by many strong female professionals and agents. Why do you think women have become such a major driving force within this part of the sector?

In Cambodia, women have long played important roles in commerce and entrepreneurship. As the property market has matured, many women have successfully transitioned these business skills into real estate sales, agency leadership, property management, and development roles.

Property is easily one of the biggest ticket items. Decisions from rent to sell normally involve women; especially if it's a family decision. With that said, women in Real Estate Professions possess great relationships building and communication skills. This allows them to understand real property seeker's needs and be able to find the most suitable solutions to the customers.

Besides, women are often seen to carry a high level of attention to details. Successful transactions require great planning of finances, managing documentation, timelines, negotiations, and client expectations. Many women excel at handling multiple details simultaneously while ensuring nothing falls through the cracks.

The Evolution of Cambodia's Property Market

CLR: Cambodia's real estate market has gone through major periods of growth, adjustment, and transformation. What trends do you believe are currently shaping the future of the sector?

Cambodia's real estate market is entering a more mature phase, shifting from rapid expansion to a stronger focus on sustainability, consumer demand, and long-term value creation. Several key trends are shaping the future of the sector:

-Shift from Speculation to Fundamentals

In the past, many buyers focused primarily on capital appreciation. Today, investors are paying closer attention to rental yields, occupancy rates, developer track records, and long-term demand.

Projects with strong fundamentals are increasingly outperforming purely speculative investments. Due diligence is being a crucial task that every seekers now are doing before buying any property.

-Growth of Affordable and Mid-Market Housing

As urbanization continues and the Cambodian middle class expands, demand for affordable condominiums, Boreys, and housing for local professionals is growing. This segment is expected to remain one of the strongest drivers of the market.

This also accompanies the growing of payment flexibility and as low financial commitment in terms of downpayment as possible. On top of that, developer financing is also going to be the core part when it comes to the decision to purchase.

-Expansion of Foreign Investment

Cambodia continues to attract international investors due to its strategic location, dollarized economy, young population, and relatively accessible property market.

The government's commitment in ceasing the online scam will continue to grow the market confidence in foreign buyers, generating more demands in the real estate residential, commercial and industrial segment.

Building More Women Leaders in Real Estate

CLR: What more can real estate companies and industry leaders do to encourage and support more Cambodian women moving into management and leadership positions?

Some of the keys actions based on my experiences on how to empower more Cambodian women into management and leadership positions includes but not limited to (1) providing a clear pathway for career development that goes beyond traditional male-focus role, (2) investing in leadership training courses for potentials individuals regardless of gender, and most importantly (3) enforcing a culture of equal treatments and opportunities. At [Realestate.com.kh](https://realestate.com.kh) where I'm working, never in a day I feel like women vs men in professional careers.

Once this invisible barrier is no longer being sensed or presented, the confidence level and works quality can be seen quite obvious, and that's how we've got to see more women leaders in our company.

Advice for Future Women Professionals

CLR: What advice would you give to young Cambodian women who are interested in building careers in real estate, property advisory, or business leadership?

My advice to young Cambodian women is to be bold and confident in your abilities and never underestimate the value you can bring to the table.

Real estate is a relationship-driven business, and success comes from knowledge, integrity, resilience, and the ability to create trust with people. Go above and beyond the concepts of men and women because career building is not just about winning against a particular gender.

Don't be afraid to start small. Every successful leader, entrepreneur, or top-performing agent began by learning the fundamentals, making mistakes, and gaining experience.

Focus on developing your expertise, understanding the market, and continuously improving your communication and problem-solving skills.

I would also encourage young women to think beyond sales. Explore opportunities in investment advisory, property management, marketing, operations, and leadership.

The real estate industry offers many different career paths, and some of the most impactful roles are behind strategic decision-making.

Most importantly, invest in yourself. Read, learn from mentors, join the training course, register for useful seminars, build your network, and stay curious. The market will change, but people who continue learning and adapting will always remain valuable.

Cambodia's real estate sector is still evolving, which means there are tremendous opportunities for the next generation of leaders. If you are willing to work hard, maintain high professional standards, and stay committed to your goals, there is no limit to what you can achieve."

Interested in Cambodia's property market? To discuss real estate opportunities, investment, or market insights, please contact Vatey Mom at +855 85 590 604.





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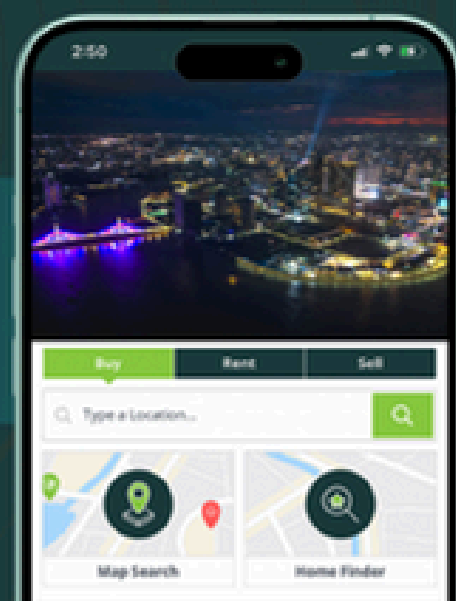
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