

SHE INVESTMENTS JOINS AS CAMBODIA PARTNER FOR YOUTH BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL'S RAPID RESPONSE RECOVERY PROGRAMME, FUNDED BY GOOGLE.ORG, TO SUPPORT WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS TO BUILD DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS TO ENABLE THEM TO RECOVER AND REBUILD FROM THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The program, led by Youth Business International (YBI) and funded by [Google.org](https://www.google.org), Google's philanthropic arm, will support underserved micro, small and medium businesses to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

SHE Investments has been confirmed as YBI's delivery partner for Cambodia, and over the next 5 months will work with a project team to develop and deliver digital literacy training and support for Khmer women entrepreneurs struggling in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

The global economy is suffering from an unprecedented shock as a result of COVID-19, and Cambodia is already struggling with a significant loss in exports and tourism, which contributes to around 25% of the country's economy. 61% of businesses in Cambodia are owned and run by women, with the majority being in the micro and informal sector; many of whom will suffer significant losses in 2020 as a result of the economic impact on businesses.

Throughout the peak of the COVID-19 crisis, SHE continued to deliver programs and coaching to women entrepreneurs using online tools, and in doing so realized that there was a significant lack of digital skills amongst many women running enterprises.

"Businesses now need to focus on recovering and rebuilding from this initial economic shock", says Celia Boyd, co-founder and Managing Director of SHE Investments, Cambodia's first and only business incubator and accelerator for women that is delivered in Khmer language, by Khmer women.

"There is a significant gap in digital literacy skills in Cambodia, and those of us supporting entrepreneurs need to re-focus our efforts on building the skills which will enable business owners to adapt their business models, and to be able to access online resources. During COVID we realized that many of the women in our network needed support with digital tools including using computers, smartphones, and ICT tools such as Zoom effectively, and many expressed a wish to improve knowledge and skills in areas such as developing websites, using online functions, and reaching their customers using social media. They also needed additional support to understand managing their finances during and after the crisis, and in adapting to a new economic environment."

With typically tight margins, micro, small and medium businesses are vulnerable to economic downturn. The current pandemic is having a particularly serious impact on business owners and entrepreneurs from underserved communities, including young people (aged 18-35 years), women, and refugees and other migrants. Many are struggling to get through the crisis, and

SHE and YBI, with support from Google.org, intend to build the digital skills of women entrepreneurs in Cambodia to help them rebuild their businesses.

SHE's Digital Literacy program will be delivered in 2 parts:

- 1) An intensive Digital Literacy Skills training program for 40 selected women with MSMEs affected by COVID-19. This program will be delivered for 2 cohorts (20 women each), over 5 days (1 day every 2 weeks), focusing on a range of topics including Crisis Management, Social Media, Financial Management and Forecasting, Using Smartphones Effectively, and Online search Tools such as Google, free website builders, etc. Participants in this selected program will also receive a free laptop from KOOMPI, Cambodia's first locally designed and made laptop.
- 2) Video tutorials which will be made publicly available, on a range of Digital Literacy topics, designed to help entrepreneurs across Cambodia improve skills in areas such as social media. All videos will be in Khmer language, and developed with a team of local experts.

SHE is excited to build a project team consisting of Khmer entrepreneurs, several of which are SHE graduates themselves, and most of whom are female. The team includes KOOMPI as the provider of laptops for program participants; Sokneang Nodzak (founder and CEO of Kokopon), Sotheavy AT (founder of "Think Plastic" and "Stay Home", and social media expert in Cambodia), and 606 Media, a female-founded team of video producers, along with the SHE Investments team. Google employees will also volunteer time to share knowledge and expertise, helping business owners.

"We are particularly excited about the opportunity to engage other enterprises in this project, as a way of driving further revenue and collaboration into Cambodia's economy during this time", said Ms. Boyd.

"SHE is as committed to supporting women entrepreneurs in Cambodia now as we ever have been, and we are excited to be a part of YBI's Rapid Response and Recovery Program funded by Google.org."

Applications for the intensive Digital Literacy Training Program, beginning mid-July 2020, were launched on Friday 12th June. Applications are open until June 24th, and women who have been running businesses for more than 6 months (pre-COVID) and who have been impacted by COVID-19 can apply here:

<https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/x/T1p03csV?fbclid=IwAR15oa6NTdo8Z6QAbZpvTx8kR0eATJCJR RkyM8jXUVv3mMJ69Mix7N5Jy3I>

Anita Tiessen, CEO of Youth Business International, said:

"The world is changing dramatically from day to day and I feel deeply for business owners everywhere, especially those running smaller businesses and are from underserved communities, who are often least able to bear the economic shocks of this crisis.

"In the face of these challenges, I have been incredibly inspired by the quick response of our network to support business owners around the world. YBI, with Google.org's new funding commitment, will help us sustain and extend this support throughout 2020, ensuring more than 200,000 businesses can get the advice they need right now to navigate this crisis."

Rowan Barnett, Head of Google.org, EMEA & APAC, said:

"The coronavirus outbreak is taking a devastating toll on lives and communities, and small businesses are facing unprecedented challenges as they struggle to stay afloat. With this grant to Youth Business International, alongside a series of [Google initiatives and products](#), we hope to help some of the most vulnerable small businesses find a way through the crisis."

NOTES TO EDITORS

SHE Investments

SHE support women micro-small entrepreneurs to scale their businesses through Cambodia's first and only gender-focused and culturally tailored business incubator and accelerator programs. SHE provides training, mentoring, coaching, and financing opportunities for women running micro-small enterprises in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang and other provinces across the country.

Visit www.sheinvestments.com or email admin@sheinvestments.com to learn more.

Youth Business International (YBI)

YBI is a global network of expert organisations in over 50 countries supporting underserved young people to turn their ideas into successful businesses, creating jobs and strengthening communities. Our vision is a world where youth entrepreneurship is recognised for driving sustainable economic development and all young people who want to set up a business can fulfil their potential. We connect our members to share expertise and collaborate on solutions to common challenges. Visit www.youthbusiness.org.

Google.org

Google.org, Google's philanthropic arm, supports nonprofits that address humanitarian issues and apply scalable, data-driven innovation to solving the world's biggest challenges. We

accelerate their progress by connecting them with a unique blend of support that includes funding, products, and technical expertise from Googler. We engage with these believers-turned-doers who make a significant impact on the communities they represent, and whose work has the potential to produce meaningful change. We want a world that works for everyone—and we believe technology and innovation can move the needle in four key areas: education, economic opportunity, inclusion and crisis response.