



## WDE Commentary No. 12

### “Women in Agribusiness”

WDE Policy Dialogue

**WOMEN'S  
DIGITAL  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

# វគ្គទី១២

## “ស្ត្រីក្នុងអាជីវកម្មកសិកម្ម”

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Ms Chea Srey Mach, WDE Programme Assistant

The 12<sup>th</sup> episode of the WDE Policy Dialogue entitled “Women in Agribusiness” was hosted by Ms Hay Seangmey on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022. She was joined by our distinguished speaker, Ms Thaug Thyda, founder of Thaug Enterprise. This episode discussed women’s roles, problems that women entrepreneurs encounter, and policies that help support women entrepreneurs in agribusiness sector.

At the beginning of the discussion, Ms Thaug Thyda pointed out that Cambodia is an agricultural country, and men are mostly involved in this while women are at home. However, women began to take more roles internally and externally in agribusiness over the years. The agribusiness was passed down from one generation to the next, and senior female role models in this sector acted as motivators for the next generations.

Even though women began to be more active in agribusiness, they also faced several challenges. Ms Thaug Thyda stated that women generally face more challenges than men. First, physical support was mentioned because they were required to be out in the fields when doing agribusiness. Secondly, women mostly need to multitask. They needed to find a work-life balance, especially for those who have families. They needed time to support their families and be in the fields. The family barrier has become the main issue when women do business. Thirdly, technical support also played a role. The more someone knows about the technological part, the better they will survive in the industry.

Ms Thaug Thyda also offered several recommendations for women pursuing

business in the agricultural field. First, she expressed that women should stop portraying themselves as victims. Instead, they should be more involved and be open to learning about new things every day. It will give them more confidence and opportunities. Second, Ms Thyda advised women to build a network or support system. She suggested that there were many platforms to do so, including WDE and Woomentum. There were also policies and loans available at low interest to help SMEs on the government side. With the support and network provided, Third, Ms Thyda suggested the owners organise the business models, financial statements and provide a clear mission, a long term plan and impacts they are willing to create.

In addition, Ms Thyda provided insights into the agribusiness market. She revealed that it does not matter what type of crops a farmer produce. Every product or service has demand because people need to eat. The agriculture businesses can be successful when they can provide enough domestically. When someone wanted to import or export the products, they had to look at the economy of scale. They need to think about delivering it domestically before moving to the export sector.

Furthermore, Ms Thyda mentioned that pricing mattered. If the price of the products is higher than imported products, many customers will take the lower price. Other concerns would be food safety and following the standards for exports. She also argued that modernisation and digital technology are not a problem for agribusiness. They are the solutions. While the COVID-19 pandemic has had little effect on agribusiness, it has allowed farmers the opportunity to learn about

digitalisation and implement it during this period to increase domestic production.

In conclusion, Ms Thyda encouraged women to speak up. They needed to show commitment to their work. Although it might seem stressful at first, finding support is important. Asking for help does not mean we are weak or inferior, but it is a way for women to gain confidence and support. Women had already been involved in agribusiness, but they should be more active. Although women would encounter many problems on the path, there were always solutions and support from the private and public sectors.