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# Policy and Practice to Build the Next Generation of Women's Entrepreneurship in Vietnam

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# Ao Dai



Continuity



Change

## GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY

- 40 percent of Gross Domestic Product
- 50 percent of employment

## GOOD FOR SOCIETY

- Narrowing of gender gap in labor force
- Inspiration to girls and women

## GOOD FOR ORGANIZATIONS

- Diverse experience and perspectives
- Improved effectiveness and decline in conflicts

## GOOD FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Financial independence
- Increased agency and voice

**WOMEN ARE HALF OF  
THE POPULATION**



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**WOMEN SHOULD BE PLACED  
AT THE CENTER OF EVERY  
POST PANDEMIC RECOVERY  
AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORT**

VO THI ANH XUAN  
VIETNAM VICE PRESIDENT





## 2006: GENDER EQUALITY

Article 12: Gender equality in  
the economy

## 2017: SUPPORT FOR SMEs

Article 3: Definition of  
women-owned SMEs  
Article 5: Priority for women-  
owned SMEs and  
enterprises hiring more  
female workers

# Progress in Legal Framework

for Women's Business & Economic Empowerment

SMEs = Small- and Medium-sized  
Enterprises

# National Initiatives

Project 844: Startup ecosystem in Vietnam

Project 1665: Support students' entrepreneurship

Project 939: Support women's entrepreneurship

27 percent by 2025

30 percent by 2030

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NATIONAL STRATEGY ON  
GENDER EQUALITY 2021-30

Policies and National Initiatives  
to Support Women's Entrepreneurship

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# On the one side

ASIA

#10

Female participation  
in entrepreneurship

MIWE 2020

22.4% IN 2015

↑↑ 26.5%

IN 2020

women-owned businesses

Source: UN Women 2021; MIWE 2020

GLOBAL

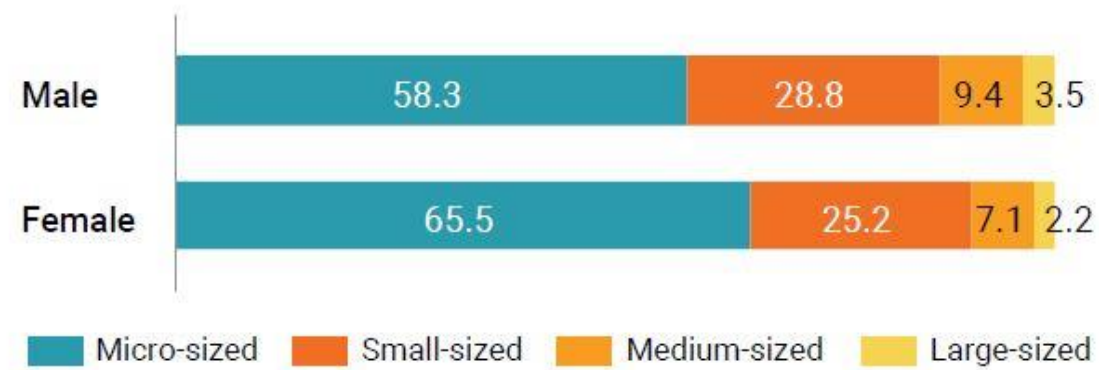
#25

Female participation  
in entrepreneurship

MIWE 2020

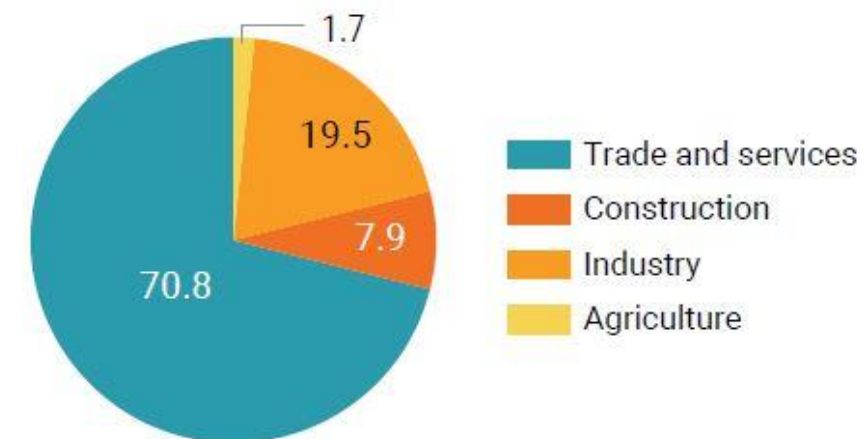
# On the other side

FIGURE 1. Percentage of different sized businesses by gender of owner, 2020



Source: Adapted from VCCI 2021.

FIGURE 2. Distribution of women-owned businesses by sector, 2020



Source: Adapted from VCCI 2021.

X2 REVENUE LOSS



**50%**

SUSPENDED DURING COVID-19



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# Ranking 44th out of 58 countries

Supporting conditions for  
female entrepreneurship

MIWE 2020

NOT GENDER RESPONSIVE

Legislation and policy

NOT DEMAND DRIVEN AND GENDER  
RESPONSIVE

Entrepreneurship training program

INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE

Women's needs for entrepreneurial  
capacity building

# My Research

- What are the perceived learning needs and interests of Vietnamese women aspiring to be entrepreneurs?
- How do current policies and programs promote or inhibit entrepreneurship capacity building for women?

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT



AMERICAN  
CENTER HCMC



## Qualitative Methodology

Interviews with aspiring female entrepreneurs

Interviews with government officials and private sector leaders

Focus group discussion with practicing female entrepreneurs

Review of research and policy documents

ENTREPRENEURIAL  
CAPABILITIES AS  
MORE IMPORTANT

Finance  
Marketing  
Communication  
Human Resources

...THAN  
ENTREPRENEURIAL  
MINDSET

Innovation  
Technology  
Risk taking  
Problem solving  
Leadership

BALANCE OF  
“FEMININE” AND  
“MASCULINE” TRAITS

“Sensitivity, prudence,  
perfectionism,  
softness”

&

“Assertiveness, risk  
tolerance, adaptivity,  
determination”

INTERNAL  
CONFLICT

Self-awareness and  
self-efficacy

**WHAT WOMEN  
WANT TO  
LEARN**

# HOW WOMEN WANT TO LEARN



## REAL WORLD CONNECTIONS

Mentoring

Panel talks

Site visits

Peer exchanges



## INTENSITY OF INTERACTION

3-12 month

In-person

Hybrid



## SINGLE OR MIXED GENDER

Gender dimension

Safe and comfortable

Diverse



# What women know and need from current policies and programs

LITTLE  
INFORMATION

"I have no idea"

LIMITED  
PREVIOUS  
TRAINING

Not specifically  
designed for  
women

FAULTY  
ASSUMPTIONS,  
MISTRUST,  
PERCEIVED  
BUREAUCRATIC  
HURDLES

Accessible information  
Reduced paperwork  
Childcare policies

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High-level interviews

# DEFICIENCIES IN POLICY DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

LACK OF

- GENDER-INTEGRATED ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICIES
- COORDINATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
- KNOWLEDGE OF GENDER DIFFERENCES

# Recommendations

## A 3-pronged approach

Valerio, A., Parton, B, and Robb, A. 2014. Entrepreneurship education and training programs around the world: Dimensions for success. The World Bank.



# Create a supportive context for female entrepreneurship

Gender dimensions in  
legislation and  
policies

A whole of  
government  
approach

Promotion of  
entrepreneurial  
culture for women





Understand women entrepreneurs  
and design for them

Consider all factors  
influencing diverse needs

Identify effects of implicit bias on  
participants at the very beginning





Design gender-responsive programs that go beyond learners' immediate needs

BALANCE SHORT-TERM NEEDS AND LONG-TERM GROWTH

CREATE CONTENT AND FORMAT TO NAVIGATE STEREOTYPE THREAT

GUARANTEE REAL-LIFE CONNECTIONS

It is time for  
demand-driven and  
gender-responsive  
policy and practice  
to promote female  
entrepreneurship in Vietnam



Look forward to continuing  
our conversation!

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