

ASIA-PACIFIC



YOUNG
ENTREPRENEURS
GROUP of
ASIA PACIFIC

ENTREPRENEUR

The Official Newsletter of CACCI's Young Entrepreneurs Group of Asia-Pacific (YEGAP)

April 2024, Volume 24



YEGAP NEWS

News about us – the Young Entrepreneurs Group of Asia-Pacific (YEGAP) – and what we've been up to

UPDATES FROM THE REGION

A smattering of the latest young entrepreneur success stories, news articles on entrepreneurship, and helpful tips and how-tos for better business



PUBLICATIONS & REPORTS

The latest research on youth entrepreneurship and other intersectional issues like gender equality, sustainability, and social change



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



It is with great pleasure and a profound sense of honor that I assume the role of Chairman of the Young Entrepreneurs Group of Asia-Pacific (YEGAP), succeeding Mangesh Lal Shrestha who is now elevated to the YEGAP Advisory Council as Vice Chairman. I am profoundly grateful for the trust and confidence bestowed upon me by our respected colleagues and am committed to serving the vibrant community of young entrepreneurs in the Asia-Pacific region.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mangesh for his exemplary leadership and tireless dedication during his tenure as Chairman. Under his guidance, YEGAP has flourished, advancing our mission to empower and support young entrepreneurs across the region. I am humbled to follow in his footsteps and build upon the strong foundation he has laid.

The formal turnover of the Chairmanship, which took place during the November 7 Gala Dinner at the 37th CACCI Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal, marks a significant moment in the history of our organization. Mangesh, a visionary leader and the Global Vice President (Growth and AI) for Frost & Sullivan and a very good friend of mine, graciously handed over the leadership reins to me, entrusting me with the responsibility to lead YEGAP into its next chapter of growth and success. As we embark on this journey together, I am excited to serve our organization until the next Chairman is chosen.

I am deeply encouraged by the recent developments within our network, such as the 43rd National Convention of the Young Entrepreneurs Group of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, where the 'Power of Community' was celebrated amidst challenging times. The signing of MOUs with overseas youth organizations during that important event underscores our commitment to fostering international cooperation and driving meaningful impact.

Furthermore, I am pleased to share that YEGAP co-organized with the Youth Business Club Iran and the Iranian Business Council-Dubai a virtual B2B meeting on March 6. The online meeting provided the participants the opportunity to introduce themselves to each other, discuss their business interests, and explore possible business cooperation. The attendees represented various industry sectors and fields of activity, including medical, food, chemical, car parts, clothing and garment, renewable energy, and tourism.



Looking ahead, I am pleased to invite you to the 38th CACCI Conference that will be held in Singapore on November 11-12, 2024, with the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) as the co-organizer. This historic event – the first CACCI Conference to be held in Singapore – presents a unique opportunity for us to convene, exchange insights, and forge new partnerships in one of Asia's most dynamic business hubs. As we prepare for this momentous occasion, I encourage each of you to actively participate, share your ideas, and contribute to shaping the conference program. Together, let us explore emerging trends, collaborate on innovative solutions, and reaffirm our commitment to driving sustainable growth and prosperity across the Asia-Pacific region.

Additionally, I encourage all our members to broaden our influence by inviting more young entrepreneurs from your respective countries to join YEGAP. Through expanding our network, we have the opportunity to magnify our impact, facilitate cross-cultural exchange, and unlock fresh avenues for collaboration and growth. We aim to bring in 5,000 new members before the end of this year. Together, let us nurture a dynamic community of young entrepreneurs driven by a common aspiration for success and prosperity.

In closing, I extend my sincere appreciation to our dedicated members, partners, and stakeholders for your continuous support. Together, let us chart a course towards a brighter future, fueled by creativity, resilience, and a spirit of camaraderie.

My warm regards,

ROMMEL SIM GERODIAS
Chairman, YEGAP

YEGAP NEWS



YEGAP Chairmanship formally turned over during 37th CACCI Conference



A formal turnover of the Chairmanship of the Young Entrepreneurs Group of Asia-Pacific (YEGAP) was conducted during the November 7 Gala Dinner that capped the 37th CACCI Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal. Erstwhile YEGAP Chairman Mr. Mangesh Lal Shrestha from Nepal, who is the Global Vice President (Growth and AI) for Frost & Sullivan, formally handed over the leadership of YEGAP to Mr. Rommel Gerodias from the Philippines.

Mr. Gerodias, who was previously Vice Chairman of YEGAP, will serve in the Chairmanship position until the latter part of 2024, when an election of a new Chairman will take place. With more than

18 years of experience in various industries, Mr. Gerodias is an expert and highly accomplished professional in the field of Management, Business Development, Training, Marketing, Sales, Entrepreneurship and Leadership. His expertise is in the field of Entrepreneurial Chemistry, Food & Beverage, Food Safety & Management Consulting; Proficient in communication with proven success in business development from the ground up in various businesses. He is a highly motivated and success-driven individual with a positive attitude and passion for excellence. Locally and internationally known leader in entrepreneurship advocacy and leadership.



CACCI Joins 43rd Japan YEG National Convention in Komatsu, Ishikawa



The Young Entrepreneurs Group of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Japan YEG) recently held their 43rd National Convention in Komatsu, Ishikawa from March 13 to 17, 2024. The multi-day event is an annual gathering of

young entrepreneurs from across the eight regions of Japan, packed with meetings, networking dinners, ceremonies, product exhibitions, and excursions. This year's theme highlighted the 'Power of Community' exemplified by the membership,



particularly in light of the Noto earthquake that tragically struck Ishikawa on January 1, 2024. The 2024 convention attracted over 10,000 attendees from 417 local chambers, along with foreign delegates from Cambodia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam who were invited to attend festivities on March 15 and 16. In attendance from the CACCI Secretariat were Senior Officers Teresa Liu and Abby Moreno.

Among the highlights of the convention was the signing of MOUs between YEG and several overseas youth organizations. On March 15, Japan YEG's International Business Committee (IBC) organized an MOU signing ceremony with the Vietnam Young Entrepreneurs Association (VYEA), the Young Entrepreneurs Chamber of Commerce Thailand (YEC Thailand), and the Philippine Young Entrepreneurs Association (PYEA) at the Komatsu Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Attending as observers were representatives of the Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia (YEAC), Taiwan's Third Wednesday Club Young Entrepreneurs Group (TWC-YEG), and the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI). YEAC and TWC-YEG have previously signed MOUs with Japan YEG, while the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) is a founding member of CACCI.

The MOU ceremony started off with remarks from Japan YEG Chairperson Ms. Asako Kimura, Japan YEG Chairperson of the 43rd Komatsu National Convention Mr. Tomoichiro Ono, and Japan YEG International Business Committee Chairman Mr. Hiromi Aoki. Ms. Kimura later signed three separate MOUs with VYEA President Mr. Dang Hong Anh, YEC Thailand Vice President



Mr. Kraisorn Chatlekavanich, and PYEA President Ms. Charmaine Co Leong. According to the memorandum, parties will collaborate to organize projects promoting cooperation, establish networks to facilitate business exchanges, connect businesses through trade promotion activities, support businesses in accessing capital sources, and organize workshops and forums to share experiences, knowledge, and trends, among other goals.

After the MOU signing, overseas delegates briefly joined the National Convention Networking Party at the Komatsu Dome, before being treated to dinner and a geisha performance at Kinjohro, a traditional Japanese ryotei or restaurant serving Kaga cuisine in Kanazawa.

The main highlight of the gathering was the Convention Ceremony, which was held at the Komatsu Dome on March 16. A silent prayer was offered for the victims of the Noto earthquake earlier this year, followed by remarks from Japan YEG Chairperson Ms. Asako Kimura, JCCI Chairperson Mr. Ken Kobayashi, and Chairperson of the 43rd Komatsu National Convention Mr. Tomoichiro Ono. Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry delivered his greeting via pre-recorded video, followed by the Governor of Ishikawa Prefecture and the Mayor of Komatsu City, who were both in attendance at the event.

During the convention ceremony, the different committees comprising Japan YEG provided updates on their activities during the past year. Ms. Kimura formally approved policy papers and presented recognition and awards to the winners of the business plan contest held by the organization. She then announced the incoming Japan YEG Chairman for the next year, Mr. Yuta

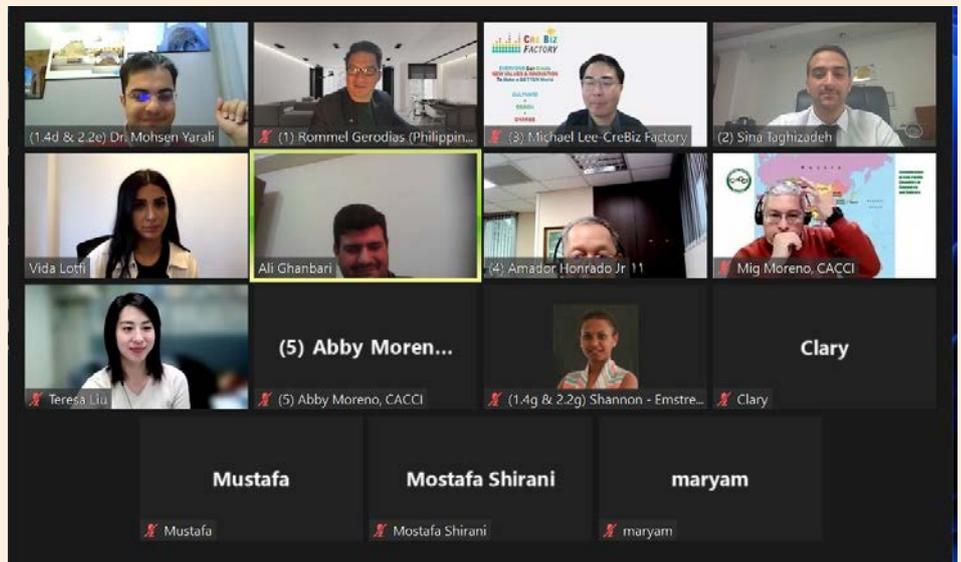


Yoshikawa from Akita Prefecture, who is currently serving as First Vice Chairman. Mr. Yoshikawa, who will take over the reigns of Japan YEG from Ms. Kimura in April 2024, delivered brief remarks,

and went on to announce that the 44th Japan YEG National Convention will be held in Kurume, Fukuoka from February 12 to 16, 2025.

Finally, IBC Chairman Mr. Hiromi Aoki stepped up to announce his committee's activities, highlighting the three MOUs signed with Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines just a day prior. He then invited representatives of the overseas delegations onstage to deliver their brief greetings and congratulations to the 43rd National Convention: VYEA President Mr. Dang Hong Anh, YEC Thailand Vice President Mr. Kraisorn Chatlekavanich, PYEA President Ms. Charmaine Co Leong, TWC-YEG Chairman Mr. Richard Lin, YEAC President Mr. Oknha Pech Bolen, and CACCI Senior Officer Ms. Teresa Liu, speaking on behalf of CACCI President Mr. Peter McMullin AM.

YEGAP Co-Organizes B2B Meeting with YEGs from Iran



The Young Entrepreneurs Group of Asia Pacific (YEGAP) co-organized with the Youth Business Club Iran and the Iranian Business Council-Dubai a virtual B2B meeting on March 6.

Moderated by YEGAP Chairman Mr. Rommel Gerodias from the Philippines, the online meeting provided the participants the opportunity to introduce themselves to each other, what their business interests are, and explore possible business cooperation.

The attendees represented various industry sectors and fields of activity, including medical, food, chemical, car parts, clothing and garment, renewable energy, and tourism.





Save the Date: 38th CACCI Conference in Singapore on November 11-12, 2024



This year's 38th CACCI Conference is set to be held in Singapore on November 11-12, 2024, with the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) hosting as co-organizer.

This will be the first time that CACCI will be holding its annual gathering in Singapore. The 2-day event will be held at the One Farrer Hotel, strategically located right above the Farrer Park MRT station in the vibrant heritage neighborhood

of Little India.

CACCI is currently working on firming up the conference program, theme, and topics, and will send the relevant information when available. YEGAP members are also encouraged to send in their comments or suggestions for conference topics and speakers. In the meantime, please save the date and mark your calendars!



CACCI Launches 2024 CACCI Awards



In conjunction with the 38th CACCI Conference to be held on 11-12 November 2024 in Singapore, CACCI has recently announced the launching of the following awards and requested all Primary Members to submit their nominations.



- 10th CACCI Local Chamber Awards - First presented in 2004, the CACCI Local Chamber Awards aims to recognize local chambers for their outstanding achievement in promoting the industrial, commercial and social welfare of their respective communities. It is also intended to help promote CACCI awareness among members of local chambers in the region.



- 9th Asia-Pacific Young Entrepreneur Award - The Asia-Pacific Young Entrepreneur Award was inaugurated in 2006 in celebration of CACCI's 40th anniversary in 2006. Presented every two years thereafter, the Award aims to recognize outstanding young entrepreneurs in the region, who are not only successful in their business, but also advocate corporate social responsibility.



- 4th Asia-Pacific Women Entrepreneur Award - The inaugural Asia-Pacific Women Entrepreneur Award was

presented as part of the activities to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of CACCI in 2016. The Award aims to recognize excellent women entrepreneurs in the Asia-Pacific rim who not only are successful in their business but also advocate corporate social responsibility for the good of their country.



- 4th CACCI Hydropower and Clean Energy Excellence Award, - Initiated by CACCI Asian Council on Water, Energy and Environment (ACWEE) , the

Asia-Pacific Hydropower and Clean Energy Excellence Award is presented by CACCI as a mark of appreciation and recognition to the person or institution that has contributed significantly to the sustainable promotion, support and development of hydropower and clean energy in the Asia Pacific region.

The winners of four awards will be formally presented their trophies during the Gala Dinner of the 38th CACCI Conference to be held on November 12.

For further information, please contact the CACCI Secretariat at cacci@cacci.biz.



UPDATES FROM THE REGION



How Business Leaders Can Help Set the Next Generation Up for Success



By [John Hall, Forbes](#)



Move over baby boomers, Gen Xers and older millennials. Gen Z and the youngest members of the millennial cohort are becoming a growing presence in the workplace. While they say you can't pigeonhole someone by generational stereotypes, those who are newer to the workforce may have different expectations. Some of the research data, at least, points toward this conclusion.

A LIMRA and Ernst & Young study shows Gen Z and millennials prioritize unconventional work benefits more than older generations do. For example, 40% of Gen Z respondents desire student loan assistance compared to 21% of Gen Xers. Younger groups also tend to want wellness perks, including mental health and fitness benefits. Forbes Advisor survey data shows flexible work options and upskilling opportunities are more likely to impact job satisfaction for younger employees.

No matter what generation you're a part of, you recognize the importance of supporting your colleagues' success. And if you're in a leadership role, you definitely know how critical it is to develop the next generation of talent. So how can business leaders set younger workers up for success? Let's ex-

plore a few ways.

Implement Professional Development Initiatives

Traditional professional development opportunities, such as mentoring or shadowing, don't seem to have as much appeal as employers might think. Instead, stipends for continued learning and access to learning management systems are more attractive. Company-wide training from other departments is also popular.

Among Gen Z and millennial employees, 74% say that the absence of skill development and career mobility options will prompt them to resign. However, career mobility doesn't always mean younger cohorts are seeking a promotion. They do want to see progress in their professional capabilities, though, even if it's making a lateral move. They want to know they have a future and that their employers back their extended career goals.

As a leader, you can support the next generation by implementing a range of learning initiatives. These could include financial support for courses related to employees' jobs. You could also purchase training resources, making them available to workers who want to upskill. To help them see progress in their capabilities, consider eliciting your Gen Z employees' help in guiding your business's marketing strategy in order to stay relevant to the next generation. Learning resources don't always have to lead to college credit or certifications, but these can be desirable.

Support Work-Life Balance

While work-life balance is something all generations desire, Gen Z is more likely to quit over the lack of it. A 2022 TalentLMs survey reveals 82% of Gen Zers want mental health days. And 74% would choose hybrid or 100% remote work arrangements. Inadequate compensation may be this cohort's top

reason for turning in their resignations, but not having a work-life balance is the second. Included in a lack of work-life balance is experiencing burnout.

Employees typically experience burnout when the demands of the job are too much. Burnout can also come from juggling competing professional and personal commitments. Long hours and unrealistic workloads or deadlines at work will increase burnout risk. However, these conditions can exist in 100% remote and hybrid jobs if your organization's demands exceed its headcount.

Supporting flexibility can extend beyond work arrangements outside of the office. You may want to look at roles within your company and consider whether they require restructuring. Meeting employees' work-life balance needs could also include hiring more people. Listen to feedback about overall compensation and whether the demands of a role are too much. After all, generous PTO doesn't help if employees don't feel they can actually take a day off.

Provide Higher Education Assistance

The average student loan borrower owes \$28,950. Fifty-five percent of public four-year university students have student loans, while 57% of those attending private nonprofit schools do. Once former college students enter the workforce, they face the challenge of stretching their wages to meet their basic needs and pay back those loans.

Unfortunately, their monthly earnings may not be enough to comfortably cover both. Employers that offer student loan assistance can be more attractive to younger generations saddled with debt. If your organization helps with educational savings plans, you can also meet the needs of older workers. They may have children to put through college and be worried about how they'll manage the expenses.

Recognizing the financial burden of post-secondary education is a way for employers to set the next generation up for success. With education assistance, your employees will be less likely to take on a side hustle to make ends meet. They'll be less susceptible to anxiety from financial pressures and burnout from overworking themselves. You'll also demonstrate you're willing to reinforce career advancement goals that require higher education.

Lifting Up the Next Generation

Understanding the needs of the next generation is key to ensuring they're equipped to successfully navigate the working world. Unlike cohorts before them, Gen Z is more willing to check out if their needs go unanswered. Implementing initiatives that support career mobility and work-life balance shouldn't be on the back burner. These are essential steps business leaders can take to pay it forward.

'The Saudi Etsy': Young entrepreneur Yara Ghouth on building Naseej Market

By [*Mark Lomas, Al Arabiya English*](#)



Saudi entrepreneur Yara Ghouth set up her first business when she was 13 years old. It was a

rudimentary, eponymous photography studio representing the beginning of an entrepreneurial journey. It took her from her childhood home in Jeddah to meetings with global leaders at the Davos World Economic Forum.

Still only 25, Ghouth is the founder of one of Saudi Arabia's most exciting-commerce platforms, Naseej Market, which gives independent artisans the opportunity to sell their products to consumers through an online marketplace.

Drawing inspiration from American





e-commerce giant Etsy, Naseej Market's main aim is to build an engaged community of entrepreneurs, and Ghouth has big aspirations for the brand.

“Our vision is to be the number one platform to empower, encourage and enable all local artists, makers and designers in the Arab world,” she told Al Arabiya English. “The craft market in the whole Arab region is a huge growth area, but is still under-served.”

Like Etsy, Ghouth said building a foundation based on community was the goal.

“If you look at Etsy, it is that community that constitutes the foundation and that is what we have tried to build. It's an artisan ecosystem. For us, that includes a marketplace, a community and also an academy where we help guide creators to build their businesses.”



Bridging the gap

Ghouth went on to add: “In this market, there are a lot of small artisan business owners who are very creative, but not necessarily very business or tech savvy. We want to be that bridge that enables them to both, work on their crafts and also monetize them.”

A born creative, Ghouth studied architecture at the University of Nottingham and was working full-time as an architect in Jeddah when she launched Naseej Market in 2020, having spent her free time building the business from scratch. The seeds, however, were sewn long before.

“I've always been a builder – my mom said I used to make things out of shoeboxes when I was a kid,” Ghouth smiles. “That developed into building actual buildings through architecture, and now I am a builder of apps and communities.”

She also said entrepreneurship runs her in family.

“I think entrepreneurship is both nature

and nurture. My mom was very entrepreneurial – she was a teacher, but then she set up a business by buying heels from Lebanon and selling them in Saudi Arabia. My grandmother used to sew and make wedding dresses, too.”

Naseej Market began as one of the many ideas that Ghouth had jotted down in her journaling notepad, but it now provides a platform for many other small business owners. Notably, the Saudi entrepreneur is aiming to educate consumers, too.

Supporting local talent

“We are more conscious than ever about how and where we spend our money,” she says. “We know what we buy has an impact – whether that is environmental, ethical, or social.”

“But for some people, it's still all about price, and if they can buy it cheaper in China, they will. Our job is to try to get them to see the importance of supporting local – not merely because they are local, but because their products are of a better quality and last longer.”

Ghouth believes she returned to her homeland from the UK at the perfect time. Her positive experience creating a successful startup in Saudi Arabia has led to her working closely with the Ministry of Investments to share her story with others.

“The reforms we've seen in Saudi Arabia have meant more opportunities for women and more global exposure,” Ghouth says. “Instead of going abroad to find these opportunities, the best opportunities are now available here, in Saudi Arabia.”

She adds: “Now I'm helping create these opportunities for others too. We want to invite more innovation and disruption so that Saudi Arabia can be the playground for startups to come and test their technologies.”

Ghouth, who now lives in Riyadh, had previously launched an initiative called ‘Her Startup,’ a community focused on female entrepreneurs. It included networking opportunities and online mentoring sessions to encourage more women to enter tech and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields.

The catalytic role of mentors

The 26-year-old admits that starting her own business was incredibly daunting – stressing that industry mentors played a major role in assuaging her self-doubt.



“Sometimes when you start a business, you feel you’re alone and you don’t know what you are doing. When you are a founder, particularly a solo one, you always go through an imposter syndrome or phases when you don’t feel like anything you’re doing is worth it,” she told Al Arabiya English.

“I have been so lucky to have amazing mentors who have reassured me. When they see your potential and remind you of it, that is something to treasure. That is why I’m now trying to be that person for other people – it makes a difference.”

One of Ghouth’s myriad interests beyond Naseej Market is the Global Shapers community, a collection of high-achieving, community-centered

individuals who are trying to influence the world positively.

She attended the Davos World Economic Forum as a Global Shapers delegate in 2022 and firmly believes that young people should be better empowered to build businesses in Saudi Arabia and around the world.

‘Increased appetite for entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia’

“Business is a cycle of trying things and failing, and young people must not be afraid of starting their own businesses or to be more proactive within the community,” Ghouth explains.

“Being in Davos was a great opportunity to advocate for young people and also for artisans and independent creators in a space where there are global leaders, CEOs, and ministers,” she adds.

“We are seeing an increased appetite for entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia and there is more of an understanding among young Saudis that businesses might not be immediately profitable, that they need long-term strategy and commitment to be successful. You need to be prepared to be disappointed at times, but just pick yourself back up – it’s a constant learning process,” she concludes.



Empowering Vietnamese young women entrepreneurs with digital skills



By [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#)



On January 27, 2024, at the Graduation Ceremony of Empower Her Tech programme, which focuses on training digital skills to young women entrepreneurs – held at the Green One UN House in Ha Noi, the top 30 trainees had the opportunity to present their individual and group

projects to UNDP representatives, distinguished guests from partner organizations, and fellow young entrepreneurs. The event aims to build a community of young women entrepreneurs to support and inspire other young entrepreneurs to learn digital skills.

With a commitment to promoting digital transformation, Viet Nam has implemented the “National Digital Transformation Programme to 2025, with a vision to 2030” as approved by the Prime Minister in 2020. This programme focuses on three pillars: digital government, digital economy, and digital society. Despite the commitment and strong support from Government agencies and other stakeholders in the ecosystem, the process of





national digital transformation and enhancement of digital capacity for the workforce in Viet Nam face challenges such as the complexity of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and notably, the gender gap in the field of digital technology. According to the research of the Viet Nam Women’s Union, women have fewer opportunities to access and use digital resources compared to their male counterparts. This disparity hinders women from harnessing digital tools for learning and working purposes.

Recognizing this situation, Empower Her Tech – a digital skills training programme co-organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Alobase, aims to enhance digital skills for young women entrepreneurs and females aged 18-35 involved in non-tech startups/businesses. The programme provides basic knowledge about Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging digital technologies, enabling young women to improve both their personal and business performances.

Officially launched on 25 December 2023, the training programme has received great attention, attracting nearly 300 applications nationwide. Sixty (60) trainees were selected, with active participation from underserved communities, including people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and the LGBTIQ+ community. These trainees engaged 10 online learning sessions, covering basic knowledge and skills in using Wix (a no-code tool for website creation), generative AI (including ChatGPT, Bard, Microsoft CoPilot), and Canva (a design tool for

non-professionals). Throughout the programme, positive feedback was received from both trainees and trainers.

Lê Thi Hà Giang, a trainee of Empower Her Tech, shared: “I would like to extend my gratitude to UNDP, the Organizing Committee, as well as the instructors who have implemented this programme. Their innovative approach, meticulousness, and placing the learners at the center have resulted in tailored content, encompassing basic to advanced skill support for all participants.”

Ms. Ramla Khalidi, Resident Representative of UNDP in Viet Nam, shared: “The ‘Empower Her Tech’ training programme is our small contribution to narrowing the gender gap in the field of digital technology. Congratulations to the aspiring and inspiring young female entrepreneurs who were part of this programme. They have taken concrete steps to build their digital skills and enhance their leadership capacities, and the giant leap to take their businesses to the next level, fostering sustainable development for all.”

The Empower Her Tech training programme aims to build a community of young women entrepreneurs to inspire and promote the application of digital technologies in both their lives and businesses. A toolkit consolidating all learning materials will be published in the upcoming time. UNDP envisions the replication of this training programme at various educational institutions throughout Viet Nam, ensuring that all young people, regardless of gender, can leverage opportunities in the digital age.



Young entrepreneurs cash in on cross-border e-commerce boom



By [Fan Feifei, China Daily Global](#)

The parents of Liu Wenhai, 33, who works in the foreign trade business in Yiwu, China’s small-commodities hub in Zhejiang province, established a hat factory in his hometown in Shandong province about 10 years ago.

During the past three years, orders at the factory, which is located in Rizhao, have fallen by

two-thirds due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Li said that when business was at its worst, hats produced at the factory had to be sold on domestic e-commerce platforms by the catty (0.5 kilograms is equivalent to one catty).

Looking to expand sales channels and



reach more overseas consumers, Liu tried to sell hats through online retailers such as Alibaba Group's AliExpress, Amazon and eBay. However, only a small number have been ordered, and he faces high operational and

logistical costs.

In October 2022, Liu received an invitation to register with Temu, a new cross-border e-commerce platform launched by Chinese online discounter PDD Holdings.

Unlike the traditional model that allows merchants to operate their own stores independently, Temu requires them to send their products to its domestic transit warehouses, while the platform is responsible for logistics, sales, operations, promotional activities, and after-sales services.

Liu said: "I just had to give this a try. To my surprise, inventory at our factory from about five or six years ago has all been cleared. I even transferred some orders to my uncle's factory because of insufficient production capacity at my parents' factory," he said.

"We usually design and produce more than a dozen new products in line with the latest overseas fashion trends, before deciding whether to increase production based on sales in the online store."

Baseball caps have gained popularity among overseas shoppers, particularly in the United States, and more than one million hats prepared by Liu and his team sold out on Temu before the Black Friday shopping carnival in November, he said.

Liu is among millions of young Chinese entrepreneurs whose parents run small or medium-sized factories that have survived operational difficulties by transforming themselves digitally.

Such operators are cashing in on the burgeoning cross-border e-commerce sector to secure new orders and boost their businesses. Experts said these cross-border online marketplaces have become an important new driving force for China's foreign trade amid downward economic pressures and external uncertainties.

Launched in the US in September 2022, Temu offers a wide selection of merchandise at

competitive prices, including clothing, electronic products, jewelry, shoes, handbags, cosmetics and baby products at competitive prices. It now has a presence in more than 40 countries in North America, Europe, Asia and Oceania.

Industry insiders said Temu's business model removes middlemen from the equation, allowing Chinese suppliers to sell directly to overseas consumers and ship directly from China, instead of building a network of warehouses abroad.

Chen Lei, chairman and co-CEO of PDD Holdings, said the company hopes to use the supply chain capacities it has built up in recent years to create a new channel. This outlet will enable consumers from different countries and regions to buy products directly from factories, providing more flexible and personalized supply chains, and more cost-effective shopping experiences.

Temu's popularity among overseas shoppers has surged. Mobile app data analytics company Sensor Tower said Temu was downloaded more than 300 million times globally between September 2022 and November last year.

Data from research company Apptopia show that shoppers spend almost twice as long on Temu than on the apps of major rivals such as Amazon. On average, users spent 18 minutes a day on the Temu app in the second quarter of last year, compared with 10 minutes for Amazon and 11 minutes for AliExpress.

Li Mingtao, head of the research institute at the China International Electronic Commerce Center, said many Chinese foreign trade enterprises have gained an upper hand in production and quality control, but lack experience and capabilities in sales and operation, making it difficult for them to enter overseas markets.

"As a new form of foreign trade, China's fast-developing cross-border e-commerce platforms can help establish a direct and definitive connection between manufacturers and consumers by applying advanced digital technologies such as big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence," he said.

Li added that manufacturers can better learn about and grasp the needs of consumers via these platforms, adjust production quickly, and reduce inventory, all of which will be conducive to improving the global competitiveness of Chinese manufacturing enterprises.

Returning home





After obtaining a master's in finance in New Zealand in 2018, Gong Zhihan decided to return to China to take over his family's factory in Jinhua, Zhejiang province.

In 1999, Gong's parents founded a company that manufactures microfiber products, including cleaning cloths, dish-washing mats, kitchen towels and bath towels. The company engaged in original equipment manufacturer, or OEM, production of cleaning products for brands sold in US supermarkets and on Amazon.

OEM refers to a company that designs a product, but then licenses it out to a manufacturer to produce.

"Orders from traditional foreign trade have dropped by nearly 30 percent since 2020, as some industrial manufacturing chains have transferred to Southeast Asia and there has been weak demand from developed countries," Gong said.

To improve the company's profitability and optimize production capacity, Gong began selling products via cross-border e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Walmart's online marketplace. In November 2022, he registered with Temu.

"Temu can help me identify the needs of consumers more accurately, and I have become more sensitive to global market trends. Our sales on the platform surged by as much as 40-fold between April and November," Gong added.

His company makes customized designs based on the preferences of consumers in different countries and also obtains their feedback before launching new products. "We hope to build up self-owned brands on the platform to enhance users' engagement and boost the repurchasing rate for products," Gong said.

Other Chinese cross-border online marketplaces are accelerating their globalization push.

Fast-fashion retailer Shein announced a further expansion of its product categories by collaborating with selected global brands and third-party sellers to meet demand from consumers for a much wider variety of products and categories.

The company's customers can now buy products other than fashionable attire, including home appliances such as portable washing machines and smart home products, including remote-controlled lighting.

Founded in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, and known for its low prices and large selection of fashionable clothing and accessories, Shein has gained traction among US shoppers. Data from the analysis platform App Intelligence show that the number of Shein downloads in the US in November surged by 26 percent year-on-year.

Meanwhile, in September, the short-video app TikTok, owned by Chinese technology company ByteDance, launched its e-commerce service, TikTok Shop, in the US. The service enables users to find and buy directly products used in live-streaming broadcasts and short videos.

TikTok, which began rolling out its e-commerce service in 2021 in Indonesia, has entered more than 10 countries, including the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam.

China's cross-border e-commerce has seen robust growth in recent years, with the sector's import and export scale reaching 2.38 trillion yuan (\$332 billion) last year, up by 15.6 percent year-on-year, the General Administration of Customs said.

Driving force

Zhang Zhouping, a senior business-to-business and cross-border activities analyst at the Internet Economy Institute, a domestic consultancy, said, "China's cross-border e-commerce sector witnessed rapid growth during the pandemic to become an important driving force bolstering development of the nation's foreign trade."

Cross-border e-commerce is also playing a vital role in encouraging traditional foreign trade enterprises to build new brands and open up more overseas markets, Zhang added.

Competition among cross-border e-commerce companies will focus on supply chain construction, he said, adding, "The core competitiveness of Temu and Shein lies in products with competitive prices and fast delivery, which are highly dependent on the establishment of the supply chain."

However, experts have raised concerns about sustainability of the low-price strategy adopted by these platforms to attract bargain hunters, saying it may squeeze the profit margins of small companies.

In view of the increasingly intensified competition among emerging Chinese cross-border e-commerce platforms targeting price-sensitive

consumers, US tech company Amazon said it would sharply reduce fees for merchants selling clothing priced below \$20.

From this month, Amazon reduced seller fees on clothing products priced below \$15 to 5 percent, while the rates on clothing priced from \$15 to \$20 dropped to 10 percent. The fees for both categories had previously been 17 percent.

Cindy Tai, vice-president of Amazon and head of Amazon Global Selling Asia, said that this year the company will step up efforts to help Chinese merchants build brands, simplify global operations, and optimize global supply chain services. It will also support these merchants to expand their presence globally and increase localization input.

Last month, the company said it would launch its first innovation center in Shenzhen, Guangdong. The center is expected to accelerate innovation among sellers for new product introduction, brand building, digital operations, green development, and new business models.

Data from Amazon show that the number of Chinese sellers with sales exceeding \$1 million on the online retailer's global sites rose by more than 25 percent year-on-year from October 2022 to September. The number of such sellers with sales of more than \$10 million rose by nearly 30 percent

year-on-year.

Moreover, the quantity of merchandise sold by Chinese sellers to consumers and corporate buyers through Amazon's global sites rose by more than 20 percent year-on-year during this period.

Zhang Jianping, head of the center for regional economic cooperation at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said, "Cross-border e-commerce platforms connect some key links covering procurement, sales and logistics, to provide a new way for micro, small and medium-sized Chinese enterprises to expand their footprint abroad and create unprecedented new development opportunities."

These platforms are crucial in helping brands and manufacturers better grasp customer needs and quickly adjust product strategy and brand positioning, he added.

Cui Lili, director of Shanghai University of Finance and Economics' Institute of E-commerce, said Chinese enterprises should make full use of cross-border online platforms to meet demand from overseas markets promptly, learn more about laws, regulations and quality standards in other countries, and adjust supply chains to make products that meet local requirements.

Many young entrepreneurs bullish on alternative realty asset classes

By [Bizz Buzz](#)



After learning lessons from the financial instability and job insecurity during the Covid-19 crisis, people started looking for side hustle ideas and second-income sources. Exactly at the same time, several startup entrepreneurs and new-

generation realtors have come up with a slew of alternative real estate investment platforms that are taking wings now.

The most sought-after alternative real estate asset classes include co-working office spaces, co-living spaces, corporate housing, student housing, service apartments, holiday homes, farm houses, warehouses and logistics parks. The fractional ownership model allows the investors to own a share in diverse real estate portfolios at an investment starting from as low as Rs 5 lakh onwards.

The fractional owners will not only get a stake in the property's value, but also be identified as shareholders and enjoy various benefits including





monthly returns, short-term stay options and long-term capital appreciation. “The fractional investment opportunities will soon become a common affair for residential property investors,” says Sunil Chandra Reddy, President of NAREDCO Telangana Chapter.

“The fractional ownership is nothing but partially owning a big-ticket commercial property, jointly operated by a group of investors and pooled investment. These large commercial properties do not otherwise fall under the investment potential of retail investors. The real estate management company invites retail investors to invest a certain amount and take benefit from the appreciation,” he explained.

“The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recently brought guidelines for such fractional ownership of real estate assets as small and medium Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) under the SEBI REITs Regulations 2014. This will further expand the investment opportunities for individual investors and democratise access to a traditionally inaccessible asset class for smaller investors.”

The Sebi regulation, low-ticket size, higher capital appreciation and timely returns made the alternative real estate deals lucrative to the small and moderate investors also. Most of the salaried professionals, particularly women, have been harnessing the power of alternative investment platforms to diversify their portfolios, cultivate financial literacy, and assert their presence in the investment realm.

In the ever-evolving landscape of finance, alternative investment platforms have emerged as a beacon of opportunity, democratising wealth creation and breaking down barriers that once restricted women from active participation in investment markets. Assetmonk, a Hyderabad-based alternative real estate investment platform, plays a pivotal role in facilitating women’s participation in alternative investments.

Assetmonk is offering tailored solutions that cater to the unique needs and preferences of each investor. It leverages technology to provide user-friendly interfaces, transparent investment opportunities, and personalised guidance, empowering women to navigate the complex world of finance with confidence. It has multiple co-working and co-living projects in Hyderabad,

Chennai and Bengaluru.

In an exclusive interaction with Bizz Buzz, Assetmonk Founder & CEO Prudhvi Reddy says, “We have three more assets under discussion, each in Pune, Bengaluru and Mumbai. Another asset in Hyderabad is at an early stage discussion. So far, we have raised close to Rs 350 crore through the platform from over 1,000 investors, while 35 per cent of them are from Hyderabad only.”

The company is planning to raise Rs 1,000 crore by the end of this year. Its rigorous due diligence process ensures to present the most promising opportunities to the investors. Empowered by technology, it enables investors to explore, research, and make informed investment choices. With a keen focus on an investor-centric approach, it is transforming the realty investment landscape.

FracSpace is another Hyderabad-based fractional investment and ownership real estate firm, which gives its customers an affordable option to own a unit in its diversified portfolio of properties from holiday homes to commercial spaces. It has lined up 18 properties across cities like Hyderabad, Goa, Varkala (Kerala) and Bengaluru in India, while it has plans to set up four properties abroad.

FracSpace Managing Director Unnath Reddy said, “Everyone wishes to buy a property but home loans scare them. Fractional ownership helps in fulfilling that dream without any bank loan. Our low ticket size of Rs 10 lakh per unit is attracting the customers. Apart from capital appreciation at the time of exit and short term stay options, we offer 6 per cent returns until possession and up to 10 per cent rental yields.”

“With the recent SEBI regulation, the trust levels have also increased on platforms like ours. We follow a 62-point checklist in legal documentation, and work with top advocates in each city. So far, we have invested Rs 20 crore on 10 properties in three cities of Indian portfolio alone. Out of this, around 30-35 per cent has been raised from the fractional investors during the last one year,” he added.

Hyderabad-based Laxmi Nivasam Developers is offering 8-12 per cent returns on purchase of 40-sq-yard land in the logistics park in Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh at a minimum investment of Rs 5.24 lakh. It has 2.25 lakh-sq-ft warehousing space in 10 acre land. It has invested Rs 50 crore to set up this facility in between the cities of Tirupati and Bengaluru.

Lazada provides platform for young entrepreneurs

By [The Philippine Star](#)



Managing your own business is no easy feat. Each day is filled with challenges but those who endure and thrive find overflowing fulfillment.

For Jensen Duyag and Harwin Chen, two young entrepreneurs on the Lazada platform, their success as online sellers reflect their compassion toward making a positive impact through their businesses in a collaborative environment.

Jensen, the 26-year-old owner of Sasa Fashion Shop, took over his sister's business at a young age although didn't initially take the business seriously.

But by partnering with Lazada and the support and guidance from his key account managers who guided him through every step, from maximizing Lazada University resources, to leveraging campaigns and various shopping mechanics for enhanced customer engagement, Jensen soon embarked on a transformative journey and eventually reaped the fruit of his efforts.

Sasa Fashion Shop, a go-to for quality and affordable clothes, was recently recognized as the 2023 Best in Women's Fashion – Marketplace at the annual Lazada Awards.

From a team of two to employing almost 200 people across the entire supply chain, Jensen has witnessed substantial growth in his company. This, he said, underscores Lazada's ability to facilitate business expansion and create job opportunities. Despite the ever-evolving e-commerce landscape and with continuing tech innovation, he remains confident in achieving continued success.

Harwin, the co-founder and CEO of TechTime Trade, a specialty store distributing quality computer parts and accessories since 2016, exemplifies an entrepreneur managing business growth while prioritizing employee well-being.

His homegrown store aims to fulfill a common man's tech needs or for computer enthusiasts looking to enhance their gaming experience by providing easy access to high-quality products.

During Lazada's mega campaigns, TechTime Trade experiences a 15-fold increase in its daily sales compared to regular days, thanks to the store's increased visibility enabled by Lazada's marketing solutions. During these surges in demand, Harwin recalls how his team's collective efforts helped manage the business.

The young CEO, who operates multiple businesses across different industries, emphasizes the importance of promoting sustainable growth.

"My hope for my e-commerce business is for it to become independent, for my staff to become well-trained, well-informed professionals who can handle the daily tasks on their own and make decisions independently, leveling up their overall competence."

The experiences of Jensen and Harwin in building promising brands exemplify dedication, resilience and unwavering commitment. Lazada's passion in supporting Filipinos not only empowers local brands but also champions entrepreneurs through continuous innovation.

At the core of this unwavering support is Lazada University, an interactive hub providing self-paced training, live-streamed and on-demand videos, as well as offline workshops. These resources ensure access to crucial tools and knowledge, covering various aspects such as basic store operations, leveraging campaigns, promotional strategies, and industry insights.

This equips sellers to thrive on Lazada and beyond. This comprehensive support is instrumental in helping entrepreneurs become a successful online seller, enabling them to make lasting impact in their respective communities.





The importance of nurturing young entrepreneurs

By Stuff.co.nz



19-year-old Luca Zampese is the founder of Equitech which provides IT support for NGOs.

This story follows the journeys of two teen entrepreneurs in New Zealand, Luca Zampese and Luna Fukuchi, highlighting their respective companies and the support systems pivotal to their success.

Luca Zampese, aged 19, is the founder of Equitech, a consultancy providing IT support to NGOs. He prioritises practical experience over formal education and credits organisations like the Kapiti Coast Youth Council and Festival for the Future, along with mentors at Creative HQ, for his growth.

Luna Fukuchi, aged 18, co-founded Wellington City Market with a friend from Creative HQ. Her entrepreneurial journey began in primary school, and she values connections and collaboration. She attributes her success to her father's mentorship and programmes like the Young Enterprise Scheme, which connected her with like-minded peers.

The story emphasises the significance of nurturing youth entrepreneurship ecosystems, with experts advocating for both formal and informal education, mentorship, and industry support. It envisions a future where AI enhances entrepreneurial education and underscores society's collective responsibility in supporting young entrepreneurs.

MyMahi's Jeff King: Starting up in Palmerston North

Jeff King, a former deputy principal at Rangitikei College, co-founded the Palmerston North-based edutech startup MyMahi. Inspired by the need to assist students in capturing and owning their coaching and mentoring data, MyMahi's

platform helps students document their school achievements and career aspirations.

The company, launched in 2019, has seen significant growth, with 60,000 active students on the platform by the end of 2023. MyMahi's revenue model includes school subscriptions and sponsored content, with about 135 New Zealand secondary schools and a dozen schools in Victoria, Australia, currently using the platform.

Funding initially came from bootstrapping before securing a seed round of \$750,000 from professional investors such as Manawatu Investment Group (MIG Angels) and others from the angel investment network. King highlights the invaluable support from the local startup community, including networking opportunities and assistance from organisations like ManawaTech.

King encourages others about to start up a company to consider smaller cities or regional locations. In his case he appreciates Palmerston North's proximity to Wellington and the ease of travel afforded by its airport. He talks about the advantages of attracting and retaining staff in the region, citing the availability of affordable housing and access to quality graduates from local institutions like the polytech and Massey University.

How a board's experience helps accelerate growth

Christchurch-based RedSeed, founded in 2009 by Anya Anderson, disrupts online retail training with clients like Hallensteins Glassons and the Warehouse Group. An injection of capital from Punakaiki Fund in 2015 prompted the formation of a formal seasoned board, something Anderson encourages other startup founders to think about early.

Chair Shaun Ryan's global experience from his former tech company SLI Systems, offers crucial insights, guiding Anderson through challenges and shaping strategic decisions for expansion in Australia.

RedSeed is about to launch a new course authoring tool that allows customers to assemble their own training programme directly on the platform without using a third party tool and Anderson is

confident that will accelerate international growth. It is the company's first foray into a freemium business model, offering limited features for free and then charging a premium for more advanced features.

Reflections on 20 years in business

Ben Reid, founder of design company Milk, reflects on his journey as a second-time entrepreneur. Starting his first company while still in design school, Reid admits to initial struggles but says it is important to learn from mistakes.

After gaining valuable experience abroad and partnering with industry experts, Milk has evolved into a values-driven creative studio, achieving significant growth over the years through a mix of the right people and skills and shared values.

Reid highlights the importance of understanding client profiles and solidifying processes along with perseverance, adaptability, and continuous improvement.

The Kiwi startups making the co-CEO model pay dividends

This story explores the pros and cons of implementing of co-CEO leadership which is growing in popularity with founders.

Initially led by Michael Cardin and his brother Philip, Joyous adopted a co-CEO model to alleviate the burden of sole leadership. Despite initial skepticism, the approach fostered creativity and innovation in the startup's early stages and Ruby Koleski has joined as third co-CEO.

Sharesies, a share trading platform, also embraced a co-CEO model after initial reluctance from investors. The trio of co-founders found that shared leadership allowed for flexibility and diverse perspectives.

Similarly, Caruso, a software provider for fund managers, benefited from a co-CEO setup led by Mark Hurley and Ollie Shaw. Despite reservations from some investors, Hurley emphasises the importance of personal chemistry and shared vision among co-founders.

While co-CEO arrangements offer benefits such as shared workload and diverse perspectives, challenges like defining roles and maintaining consistency in decision-making exist.

NZGCP launches new database with Dealroom to better measure startup ecosystem

New Zealand Growth Capital Partners (NZGCP) has teamed up with Dealroom, a global data provider, to launch a startup database aiming



Mike Cardin, Ruby Kolesky, and Philip Cardin are the founders of the startup Joyous which is trialling a co-CEO leadership model.

to offer a comprehensive overview of New Zealand's startup ecosystem. The platform, accessible to everyone for free, aggregates information on Kiwi startups and investors, allowing users to search and filter by various criteria like stage or sector.

Despite potential privacy concerns, the database relies on publicly available data and encourages companies to update their profiles for accuracy.

NZGCP hopes the platform will address data gaps, facilitate investor-founder connections, and provide insights into the ecosystem's strengths and areas for improvement. Similar initiatives in other regions have shown promising results, highlighting the potential for enhanced connectivity and transparency within New Zealand's startup community.





Byju's growth cautionary tale for young entrepreneurs: Rajeev Chandrasekhar

By [Nandini Singh, Business Standard](#)



India Union Minister of State (MoS) for IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that edtech firm Byju's tried to grow too fast, undermining corporate discipline and that young entrepreneurs should learn from such mistakes,

"It was a company that tried to grow too fast, without creating the rigour and corporate discipline that a growth company like that should have at a time when money was flowing and equity was cheap. Eventually, that cycle always turns," Chandrasekhar said.

"So if you are not smart at that time and don't learn from those who came before you, you will make mistakes and I think, Byju's is that mistake," he added.

Chandrasekhar was speaking at the Mumbai Tech Week organised by Tech Entrepreneurs Association of Mumbai.

The union minister's statement comes at a time when some of the most highly valued startups, including Byju's, Paytm, Ola, and Dream11, have come under fire for a variety of concerns, casting a pall over India's technology and startup ecosystem.

Speaking about the government's stance on the gaming sector, Chandrasekhar said that it is an important segment of the economy that requires encouragement and support.

"I'm a big bullish supporter of the gaming sector. It is just so mixed up in terms of perception with all the other bad actors in that segment of real money, which are betting and money laundering. So we are progressively going down a road of creating a framework to allow safe infrastructure and permissible gaming. I would request entrepreneurs to keep faith," he said.

The minister further stated that companies like Ola that are building a new industry are expected to counter challenges and pushback.

"All four examples that were mentioned are extremely human sorts of problems," he said, adding that entrepreneurs make mistakes, and it is a natural course of building a business.

"There is a thing about discipline that some people instinctively get, and some people need to take a couple of losses to understand. These issues should not necessarily be understood as something that defines entrepreneurship," Chandrasekhar added.

The minister said that there will always be people who are smart and tend to avoid mistakes along with those who make mistakes.

PUBLICATIONS



Women Business Owners Present Green Growth Potential for Financial Institutions in Pakistan

Published by the Asian Development Bank (ADB)



Drawing on a survey of 100 women and women-owned small businesses in Pakistan, this brief shows how financial institutions can build on the momentum for change in green financing and women's financial inclusion to create a mutually beneficial path forward for them and the women they serve.

The brief considers Pakistan's progress toward building an enabling environment and explains why unlocking women's access to finance can contribute to a rise in greener economic growth.

Download [HERE](#) to read the publication in full.

The Nexus between Digitalization, Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Quality, and Economic Resilience A Cross-Country Analysis during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Published by the Asian Development Bank (ADB)



This study explores the relationship between the quality of a country's digital entrepreneurial ecosystem, measured by the Global Index of Digital Entrepreneurship Systems (GIDES), and its economic performance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on a cross-country analysis of 100 global economies, a positive association was found between GIDES and economic performance during the pandemic. This suggests that the quality of a country's environment for digital entrepreneurs can strengthen its economic resilience even in the face of major shocks.

Download [HERE](#) to read the publication in full.



Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in the Asia Pacific

Published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



This research explores the trends and patterns currently unfolding in the region by providing a qualitative analysis of emerging issues facing women and girls in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), as well as potential solutions. Despite technological advancement in various disciplines in STEM, disparities still persist in certain disciplines, including maths, physics, engineering and computer science, where women continue to be underrepresented. Representation of women in STEM remains low across the Asia Pacific Region, comprising around 23.9 percent of researchers, lower than the global average of 29.3 percent. Throughout their childhood, education, and careers, women and girls in STEM face unique challenges. Women's representation in STEM sectors experiences a significant decline during the transition from university to the workforce. Skills in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) are now vital for tackling critical and

urgent sustainable development problems, as diverse as the climate crisis and disaster risk reduction, health and education disparities, economic and food security, cyber security and even gender-based violence. Failing to promote the equal participation of women and girls in STEM has far-reaching social, ethical, and economic implications.

This study was initiated by the UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub, Gender Team in collaboration with UNDP China. UNDP teams in Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives and Thailand have also been part of this research effort, to map the challenges and advancements made by the countries in the participation of women and girls in STEM field.

Download [HERE](#) to read the publication in full.