



Case #1: Vannin

LEARNING TO FIND A BALANCE

Vannin is the owner of her own pottery business. Before the start of the Economic Empowerment for Women in Small Scale Businesses project (WEE), supported by the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), Vannin's biggest business challenge was saving money and managing her income. She shared that "The project has taught me good business concepts and I can now manage my income better".

WEE is a project organized by Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC) that recognizes the challenge women face, particularly in marginalized and rural areas, in being denied control of financial resources at home, as well as society consistently doubting their ability to financially support their families. The project combats these gender stereotypes by enhancing women's business development skills and financial literacy, while also promoting women's decision making and economic rights by working with women's spouses and local community members.

Vannin joined the WEE project in November 2018. She is forty-two years old and is the mother of two children, one boy and one girl. Her husband of twenty years, Koy Pok, washes motos and cars.

Vannin chose to get involved in the WEE project when a village volunteer explained the benefits of participation, such as increased income, building their network and expanding their knowledge of gender. While the business knowledge did intrigue Vannin, she explained that "Education on gender particularly interested me because issues such as domestic violence are very prominent in my community".

During the project, the most difficult business concept for Vannin to understand was that businesses need capital to invest and make money. Having to ask for loans from the bank to gain capital was difficult to do, although after training she understood it is a necessity.

Since becoming a project participant, Vannin has also felt a change in her personal life. Before the project, her mother was responsible for most of the housework. Since participating in WEE, both herself and her husband help more at home. "We both cook more and shop at the market. We are both enjoying helping more". Her husband Koy Pok has also become more supportive of and helpful with her pottery business since the WEE training has taught the couple how to find a balance between the two trades.

When asked what her favourite part of the project has been so far, Vannin emphasized that "This field visit to Areyksat has been my favourite part of the project so far. I have gotten to meet people from all three of the project's target provinces and make lasting friendships. I really enjoyed learning from some very successful entrepreneurs who are running profitable businesses. I found their stories very inspiring". To further improve the project, Vannin suggested hearing even more stories of women who have found their own independent and prosperous work to motivate participants to do the same.

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