

SPEECH

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ភាពជាអ្នកដឹកនាំនៃស្ត្រី
WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP
JOURNEY OF BECOMING

ADB

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Ignite Talks and Roundtable

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តិមា វិច្ឆិកាល
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Ignite

Hi! My name is Vichekal. I am 39 years old and married with two children. Currently, I'm working in a public sector as a local government administrator. It is an honor to be invited as a speaker on ADB's Ignite talks on Women in Leadership.

Before talking about leadership, I would like to share about my life experience. I graduated from high school in 1998. I can say that during my time at school, I was a

hardworking student, so I received good scores for my graduation. But after graduation from high school, I was lost. I was lost in the sense that I did not know which subject I should study at the university or which job I should pursue for my career, so I ended up enrolling for accounting [major] at the National Institute of Management with my friends.

After studying accounting for two years, I did not see myself in this field of work or becoming an accountant, because I have more interest in information technology. I enrolled at the Royal University of Phnom Penh [RUPP] for a bachelor's degree in information technology. I graduated from the National Institute of Management in 2002 and RUPP in 2005. After that, I joined the Phnom Penh administration as a civil servant. As I continued working at the busiest local authority in Cambodia, I realized it is imperative to deepen my knowledge and improve my skill if I want to contribute more as a public servant.

In 2015, I was granted a scholarship funded by the Swiss government. At the time, I was reluctant. I doubted if I could leave my family to pursue and concentrate on my study. Moreover, it would be frowned upon by the society if a woman leaving her family and pursuing higher education. Fortunately, my husband encouraged me to take the scholarship and I completed it in 2016. I earned an executive master's in development policy.

I would like to share here two lessons. One is you should take the lead in your life, know who you are and what you want to do. Second is don't be afraid to take risk. There is a saying in Khmer that *Strey Bang Vel Chang Kran Min Chum*, meaning women cannot even manage the kitchen, let alone pursuing higher education.

I must admit that it was very challenging for me to become a student again while I have to work and support my family, but I did it. I would like to share another saying in Khmer that *Sam Nap Yong Dey Srey Yong Pros* [seedlings can hold the soil, women can help men]. It is true in the context of our society now. Women do not only play a crucial role in supporting the society, but we have seen more and more Khmer women becoming leaders in their own field.

I believe that anyone can become a contributing citizen, regardless of their gender and it is important to recognize everyone's uniqueness. To be a contributing citizen, we must keep motivated, keep working hard and embrace a growth mindset. The world that we live in nowadays is full of new challenges, uncertainty, and complexity. So, do not be discouraged by setbacks in life. Take it as an opportunity to progress, I believe that there is leadership in all of us. Leadership comes in many forms, and we are a leader in our own role, regardless of the title or position we have. There are people that were born with leadership, and I believe that leadership can also be learnt. Thank you!