

## SPEECH

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ភាពជាអ្នកដឹកនាំនៃស្ត្រី  
**WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP**  
JOURNEY OF BECOMING

ADB

**A 10 YEARS JOURNEY**

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Hello everyone. My name is Neng Sokneang. I'm the Chief Executive Officer at Kokopon. Kokopon is an online marketplace that helps farmers in Cambodia and is hoping to enter the world market.

But today, I'm not going to talk about Kokopon. I'm going to talk about the 10 years of my life from the daughter of farmers to the owner of a company. Ten years ago, I frequently went to the farm with my parents, and I felt that I didn't want to be a farmer. I

wanted to find a good job that can help my family. Even though we worked hard and tirelessly, we still had financial difficulties.

Eventually, I received a scholarship from an organization called PNC and my wage was only \$20 a month. I needed to buy food and live on this low wage.

Next, I went to work at the DDD company. They gave lots of benefits such as requiring us to work for only one morning and gave scholarships for us to study. Back then, I studied IT and IT is a class that's lonely for women as I was the only female in a class full of male students which also made me uncomfortable.

Although, regarding the experience, it changed my life as I can get along with men and women through learning IT, and during the same time I received a scholarship from HRD center, which is a Korean institution.

I have finished both institutions and I've finished studying IT successfully. After I finished, I worked in a company called Co-sign. Co-sign is a company that provided me with lots of knowledge and I learned how to develop programs for computers and phones. At the time, I got a reasonable wage as well. I had a dream that I wanted to leave Cambodia at least once in my lifetime. So, I started saving 80 percent of my salary.

After a year I was able to save enough money to visit Malaysia and Singapore. When I went to Singapore and Malaysia, it gave me lots of experience, particularly in technology and the development of each country. I thought I could use my skills to help my country.

When I came back to my country, I used the remaining money to open a company called Kokopon. During that time, my business was connected with big companies and youth.

Then, COVID-19 almost caused my business to fail. During that difficult time, I saw that our farmers suffered greatly. They don't have any way to sell their product as people were worried about their health. I've seen this as an opportunity and told my team that we need to help our farmers find their market.

So, I used the technology that we have to help farmers and many customers bought the products. I was very happy as I saw that what we did created a positive impact on our country.

Moreover, I saw that the farmers didn't know much about digital technology. So, we taught from province to province and right now we are teaching online all over the country.

The longer I do my job, the more I realize that women can achieve anything if we set clear goals. I have heard sayings that if a woman receives a very high education, not many men will want to marry her.

But if she marries a man that received high education, she is lucky. I don't like these words. If a woman has goals and is confident with herself, she will achieve whatever she dreams.

Also, when I read a book called Shoe Dog by Phil Knight, the owner of Nike, he talked about his journey from start to finish. His brand inspires me as it shows we can achieve our goals whether we are men or women.

Other books also advise us to follow our passion but I believe we should do not what we are passionate about but what is connected to our goals. So, you overcome and get out of your comfort zone to do things you don't like doing to achieve things that you want.

So, to women around the world as well as women in Cambodia: set goals, build confidence, break the social norm, learn yourself, keep studying, and be brave. Thank you.