



# UNDP MEDIA ALTERNATIVES PROJECT BUSINESS CHALLENGE THE WINNERS





# PROJECT SUMMARY

In Cambodia, like in the rest of Southeast Asia, the media landscape and its capacity to advance freedom of expression are being challenged by the “twin crises of trust and sustainability for journalism”.<sup>[1]</sup> Disinformation has undermined the veracity of news and damaged the trust in the media as a democratic institution. Certain limitations and cumbersome regulations have also impacted the ability to operate of some media outlets. In addition, media organizations have suffered from market pressures and struggle to achieve sustainability in a competitive and crowded environment.

In a positive development, new and alternative media experiences are emerging, which are capable of surviving and even thriving in the most challenging circumstances. Newsrooms are being transformed into creative and innovative spaces where digital content developers, engineering and product designers, data scientists and business-savvy editors collaborate with traditional figures like journalists.

These “media alternatives” can take different forms and formats: some are for-profit enterprises that adopt new business models, while others represent creative experiments led by ordinary citizens. Technology has fundamentally changed traditional business approaches, content production, its distribution, and even ownership. Quite interestingly, some of these media alternatives run revamped versions of traditional business models based on limited quality readership.

It is, however, in its citizen-enabling power that technology and social media, in particular, have shown more dynamism. Celebrities, musicians, vloggers, and active citizens are using different social media to broadcast their ideas, hopes, and concerns. This demonstrates the presence of a great potential for new forms of digital and alternative media. Through its “Media Alternatives Project”, UNDP Cambodia has been exploring new ways to support media entrepreneurs to increase their resilience, expand civic spaces, and promote freedom of expression.

In promoting young Cambodians to become leaders in the media sectors, the project focusing on empowering local women entrepreneurs to create and scale up media platforms where women can access quality news that is relevant to their lives and needs. This focus on women’s leadership and entrepreneurship attempts address the gender gap that persists across Cambodia’s private sector, in particular within the media sphere. In fact, the most common forms of news are mostly followed and consumed by men.

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://blog.joincivil.com/a-non-blockchain-y-person-explains-civil-d9f59d5d2c96>

## Main project components:

1. Media market audit and mapping of media alternatives in Cambodia
2. Media business challenge to select media start-ups
3. Acceleration programme to support innovative and sustainable media start-ups
4. Public debates on opportunities and challenges of media organizations in Southeast Asia.

**Project start/end dates: 1 June 2019 – 31 March 2020**

**For more information: Fabio Oliva, Peace and Development Advisor (fabio.oliva@one.un.org)**

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# SELECTION CRITERIA

## Clarity of the problem the business aims to solve and the solution

Is the applicant clear about the problem they wish to solve? Do they have a defined and well researched problem & solution?

## Business model

Does the applicant have a clear existing business model, or a clear business model in mind? Do they understand their audience, and how they can make profit? Do they have realistic expectations of revenue and expenses, and channels to reach their market?

## Innovation

Does the business have a clear value proposition?

## Evidence of Market Potential

Has the business demonstrated some initial success in the market? Have they got a proven prototype and demonstrated audience or following? Are they already profitable? Is their current or future business model potentially sustainable, or reliant on grants/volunteers?

## Commitment

Is the entrepreneur committed to the program? Do they intend to register in the future, or are they already registered? Are they working on the business full-time, or close to full time? Are they clear about their reasons for joining the program?

## Potential for Impact

By supporting this business to grow, will it have the potential to create significant and measured impact for targeted Cambodians? (e.g. through awareness, access to information)

## Team Capacity

Does the team have the ability, skills, or experience to create launch the product? Do they demonstrate ability to think on their feet, show critical thinking, knowledge and understanding of their idea's potential value and feasibility? What is the gender ratio in the team?

# MEDIA ALTERNATIVES BUSINESS CHALLENGE

## APPLICATIONS CLOSING

October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019

37 applications received products

## BUSINESS CHALLENGE

November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

Public Presentation and final one-on-one interview

## INCUBATION PROGRAM

November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

September 2019

### #1 Information Sharing Session

Overview of the Business Challenge requirements

### #2 Information Sharing Session

Business Challenge application process

### #3 Information Sharing Session

Final feedback or inputs on potential media products

## SELECTION OF 12 FINALISTS

October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Jury composed of representatives from UNDP, UK Embassy, Splice Media and SHE investments evaluated the 37 applications and shortlisted 12 proposals. 10 out of 12 shortlisted entities led by women.

## WINNERS ANNOUNCEMENT

November 2019

5 Media alternatives proposals are selected for the incubation program.

## END OF INCUBATION CYCLE

March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020



# ABOUT THE MEDIA ALTERNATIVES INCUBATION PROGRAM

The four-month Incubator style program that the selected media entrepreneurs will undertake has been collaboratively designed by SHE Investments, Splice media and UNDP. OHCHR and UNESCO will also be providing training sessions.

The program curriculum has been written by SHE Investments, using evidence-based content and experience supporting hundreds of Cambodian entrepreneurs and start-ups over the past 5 years. Splice Newsroom have provided industry-specific technical expertise and one to one coaching for enterprises and their products during the early stage of the program.

## UNDP and British Embassy in Cambodia

UNDP Media Alternatives Project Team with the financial support from British Embassy will be designing, implementing and coordinating all the activities under the program. The team aims to open the door for the emerging media entrepreneurs and build a community to promote media resilience in Cambodia.

## SHE Investments (Support Her Enterprise Co. Ltd.)

SHE Investments is a social enterprise that delivers the first and only gender focused and culturally tailored business incubator and accelerator programs for women entrepreneurs in Cambodia. Their mission is to support women micro entrepreneurs to scale their businesses and create social and economic impact for communities. All the workshops as part of the Media Alternatives project are designed using a gender lens and delivered by highly trained and experienced female Khmer facilitators.

## Splice Media

Splice has a mission to drive radical transformational change by supporting bold, forward-looking media startups in Asia. They work with news organizations to provide deep, transformational work backed up by years of experience in reporting and research into media in Asia.

In August 2019, Splice conducted an audit into the state of media in Cambodia. They interviewed newspaper publishers, non-profits, investors, foundations, educators, media startup founders, UN and development agencies in Phnom Penh. They identified key steps needed to build an ecosystem around new media initiatives in Cambodia and these findings have supported the design of the incubator programme.

## UNESCO and OHCHR

UNESCO and OHCHR are partners for the project and both have supported the Cambodia media sector in several ways for a long time, this has included facilitating the drafting of Access to Information Law together with the Ministry of Information. Utilising their expertise, tailored coaching related to investigative journalism and ethics, how to constructively engage with national authorities, guidance on Cambodian laws, taxes, and regulations governing the industry will be delivered.

# MEET THE COACHES

## SHE INVESTMENTS



Lida & Celia @SHE Investments

### Lida Loem

is the co-founder of SHE Investment, she holds a Bachelor of Science in Economic Management and Human Resources Management. She will be the lead facilitator for the incubator business training.

### Celia Boyd

will work with the media entrepreneurs to provide expert advice on Strategic Partnerships. She will work with them via 1:1 coaching focusing on “Business Development & Strategic Planning” and “Funding & Resource Mobilization”. She holds a Master’s in International Development and a Bachelor’s in Communications.



James @SHE Investments

### James Wilson

is an expert on business development and holds a Master’s in Business Administration. He will provide 1:1 coaching to the entrepreneurs on business administration topics.

## SPLICE MEDIA



Rshad & Alan@Splice Media

### Alan Soon

is Asia’s leading expert on newsroom operations, digital transformation, and building the new business of media. He also advises early-stage media-tech startups. He is the co-founder of Splice Media. Alan will provide 1:1 coaching with the media entrepreneurs.

### Rishad Patel

is a product and design professional. He is the co-founder of Splice Media. For over twenty years, Rishad has designed and developed products for the web, mobile, radio, advertising, newsrooms, newspapers, magazines, podcasting, branding, books, and floor rugs for companies in Singapore, India, New Zealand, Europe, and the United States.

## The training

The curriculum for the training program has been designed to take participants through the following staged process:

### 1. Product Development

- a. Design Thinking
- b. Vision Boards & Goal Setting
- c. Product development
- d. Feedback from media experts

### 2. Business Model

#### Development

- a. Value Propositions
- b. Sustained Competitive Advantage
- c. Business Models

### 3. Marketing

- a. Strategic Marketing
- b. Branding
- c. Digital Marketing

### 4. Business Management

- a. Financial Management
- b. Team Management
- c. Team Building
- d. Business formalization; registration process, legal and tax compliance

### 5. Future Planning

- a. One-page business planning





Attending the first session under the incubation programme ©SHE Investments

# 606 Media



Panha S.Theng@606

We are a digital media startup that we launched in early 2019. We work on video, media and digital content. We want to be able to bring diversity in content to the digital audience in Cambodia.

Our first project is called Digital Noodle – producing digital shows about startup and technology. We are working on creating a podcast that will provide essential information about the startup industry to aspiring entrepreneurs. We consider access to reliable data and information is a key factor in the success of one’s business.

**NAME OF THE PRODUCT:**

Digital Noodle

**MEDIA PRODUCT:**

A podcast series

**SUBJECT:**

Startup and technology, with a special focus on women entrepreneurship in the tech startup sector.



San Somnear@606

“We are very much looking forward to meeting the mentors as part of the Media Alternatives Project and build our skills on financial planning, human resourcing and to help validate our business plan so we can make 606 Media work”

Our vision is to be the most reliable media agency in the next 5 years and be able to produce creative content in Cambodia.

In case you are wondering, “606” is the street number of our first office.



Voneath Pen@606



Attending the first session under the incubation programme ©SHE Investments







Svay Leemeng, Kim Dyna,  
Suong Mak, Chan Sinet  
©Chatva Plus

# ចិត្តាផ្លិស Chatva Plus

**NAME OF THE PRODUCT:**

We are still deciding!

**MEDIA PRODUCT:**

12 short films

**SUBJECT:**

Social issues with a special focus on challenging the gender norms that exist in the media sector and within Cambodian society.

“Our strapline is ‘The Universe of Creativity’. To reach our potential, we need to extend and enhance our skills and seek advice on our business model to ensure our team’s sustainability. We have started to see the positive change we bring to the media sector in Cambodia and we want this to continue and grow”



Chan Sinet©Chatva Plus

Chatva Plus (ចិត្តាផ្លិស) started as a group of writers when we would meet up to write screenplays, but it wasn't long before we realized our potential creating Khmer content that put social impact at the core.

We started to see the positive change we were bringing to the media sector in Cambodia, via our content, from creating job opportunities, training and challenging the gender norms that exist in the sector and within Cambodia.





Bun Saosopheakneath, Chinh Ratha,  
Hing Socheata, Seng Solydeth  
©Dos Slab

# ដុះស្លាប

## Dos Slarb Multimedia



**NAME OF THE PRODUCT:**  
We're still deciding

**MEDIA PRODUCT:**  
Website and social media

**SUBJECT:**  
Sexual and reproductive health and well-being of young Cambodians



Official Business Challenge Day©UNDP

*“We are thrilled to be part of the Media Alternatives project. We are not professionals yet, but we are creative, energetic, ethical, flexible media producers. We are so excited to learn about business development and look forward to engage with private companies and organizations for partnerships. “*

We are Dosslarb, a group of four young female media and business graduates passionately working in the media field.

Dosslarb is a multimedia platform with the aim of promoting the well-being of young Cambodians. Through our content, we want young people to take the first step to discuss sexual and reproductive health. We encourage young people to understand sex education and use the knowledge to make decisions, however, we aren't stopping here. Via our content, we want to tackle many more issues that young Cambodians are facing.

Our goal is to be a trustworthy media agency which is made by youth for youth. We want to share stories, make educational and informative content so our audience can learn from their small screens and not only when in school.





Nhek Sreyleak with her team  
©Thmey Thmey

# Thmey Thmey 25

**NAME OF THE PRODUCT:**

ThmeyThmey25

**MEDIA PRODUCT:**

Website and social media content

**SUBJECT:**

Agriculture, tourism, and local businesses across 25 provinces in Cambodia with a focus on supporting and providing information to people living in rural areas.

“ I am thrilled to be selected for the Media Alternatives project. I hope that I will gain a lot of knowledge about running a business and developing new products. I want to be able to lead a successful and efficient business”

Nhek Sreyleak, Deputy Editor of ThmeyThmey25

My name is Nhek Sreyleak, I am currently the Deputy Editor of ThmeyThmey25. My vision is to make ThmeyThmey 25 into an E-Info-Commerce, which is not only an information outlet but a farmer's market. I commit to make ThmeyThmey25 to be an independent, impartial, comprehensive and reliable media outlet for readers. I am thrilled that ThmeyThmey25 was selected for the Media Alternatives project with UNDP.

©UNDP





Sokcheng Seang & Alix Feschotte ©WAPATOA



# WAPATOA

**NAME OF THE PRODUCT:**

Not yet there!

**MEDIA PRODUCT:**

Website and social media

**SUBJECT:**

Education, health, community environment travel and culture

“Our aim is to nurture a generation of curious, mindful, happy & socially conscious people. Collaborative, open and bilingual, Wapatoa is a safe space for sharing and dialogue where we channel the under-represented voices of youths and women”



Sharing session ©WAPATOA

Launched in 2018, Wapatoa is an online content platform and community. We publish thought-provoking, cultural and educational content that's also fun, engaging and aimed at young Cambodians. Our aim is to nurture a generation of curious, mindful, happy & socially conscious people.

Our weekly publications focus on our users' interests: personal & professional development, general knowledge, society issues and culture. We produce quality content including original articles as well as creative videos, podcasts, photo series and comics.







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