



Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation

13th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WOMEN LEADER'S NETWORK WLN



Educating Women for the Digital Economy

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being digital

- What does it mean to be digital?
 - To you?
 - To your work/your business?



being digital

- "Being digital is different ..We are not waiting on any invention. It is here. It is now. It is almost genetic in its nature, in that each generation will become more digital than the preceding one."

Nicholas Negroponte (Being Digital, 1995)



Globalised world

- Technology at forefront of change;
- Key themes: **connectivity, communication, conversation, communities, collaboration, creation & cross-fertilisation of networks;**
- Flat world: global web-enabled platform for multiple forms of collaboration, enabling for the purposes of economic development & innovation; resource production; education & research.



Globalised Platforms

- Operates across geography, distance, time, language
- Productivity, growth and sustainability will increasingly accrue to those regions, companies, individuals, universities and groups who get three basic things rights:
 - Infrastructure to connect to platforms;
 - Education to get more people working of, innovating on and tapping into platforms;
 - Governance to get best out of platforms.



new ethics, programs and policies

- for globalised work & life
 - Move away from gender as women's issue to gender as a central organising feature of social life, with implications for women, men and how we work;
 - **Millennium Goals** - New political agenda: resurgence of social good and the greater good;
 - Broader cultural shift for which we must build an agenda of progressionism;
 - Need to open dialog to address economic, social, educational and cultural changes of our time.



Opportunity

- **Entrepreneurship ++**

- Women are untapped source of labour & small business;
- Provide up-skill choices;
- Research how up-skills choices work and work out;
- Mentor and link into relevant networks & communities;
- Provide access to education and mentoring;
- Foster entrepreneurship & export;
- Show leadership across the board.

Progress systematically to eliminate barriers and make it easier for women to develop to their full potential



The Digital World is changing the Rules of the Game

- New business models
- New ways to interact
- New ways to communicate
- Knowledge is a commodity



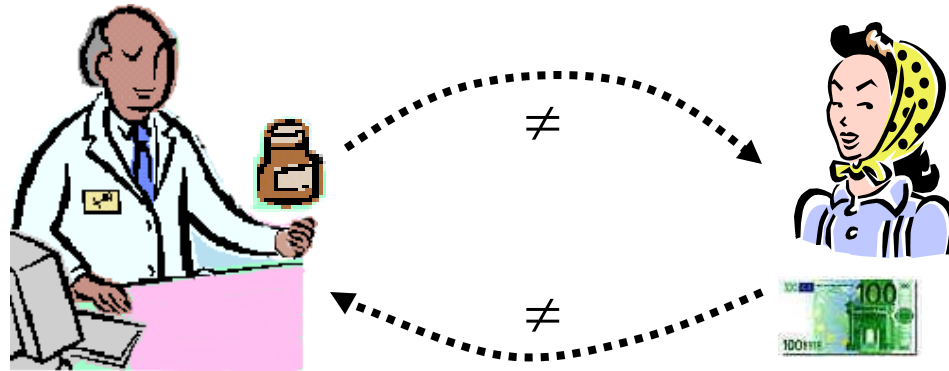
the knowledge economy

- Through its impact on transactions, communications and problem solving, the digital economy is increasing opportunities for business and changing the nature of how we work – ***this may provide an advantage to women, especially women entrepreneurs;***
- The digital economy represents an important new dimension because ICT is reducing the importance of location and a 'standard' day, changing business models, potentially creating a level playing field;
- There are a multitude of (niche market) opportunities in the digital economy.

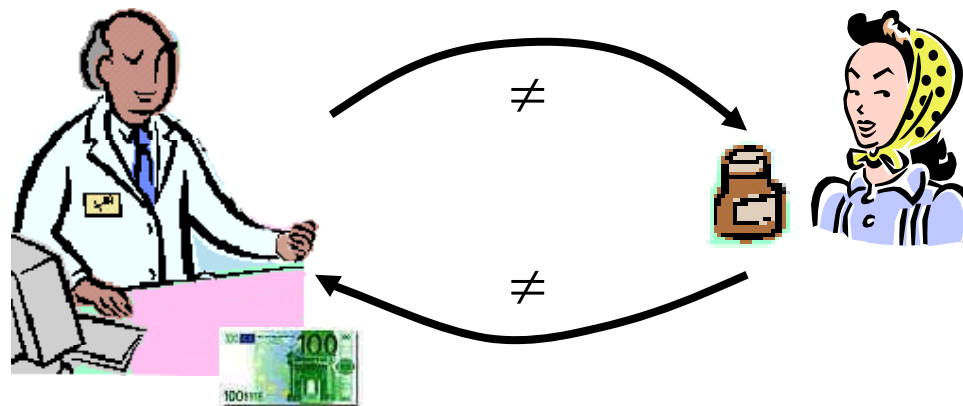


Business in the old economy...

Before a deal

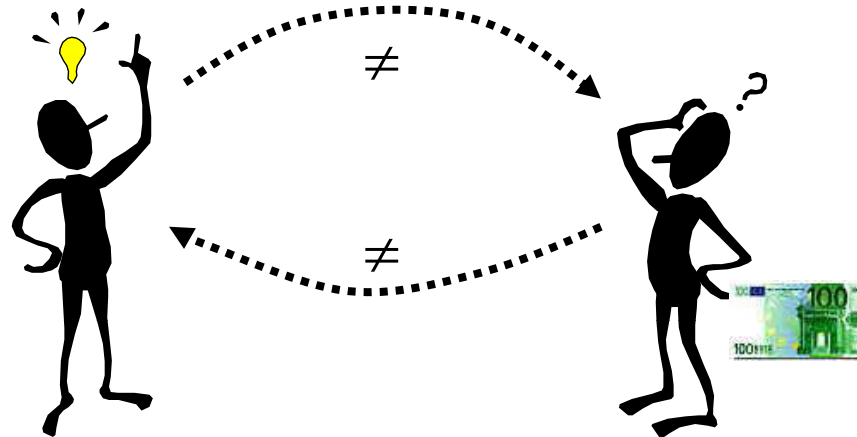


After a deal

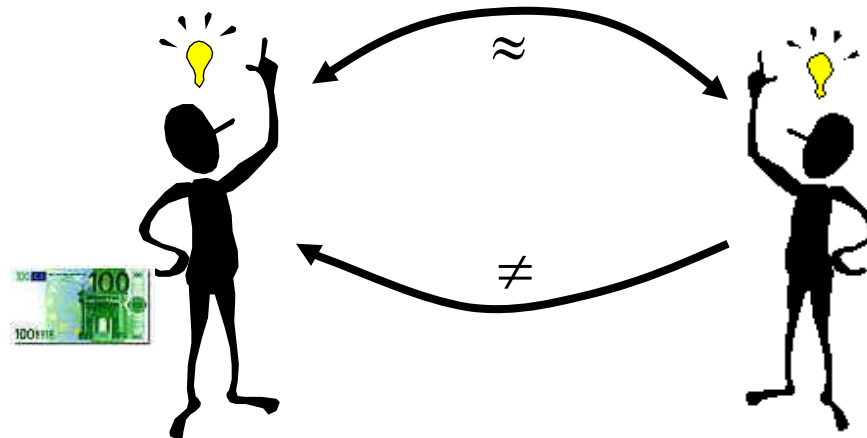


Business in the new economy...

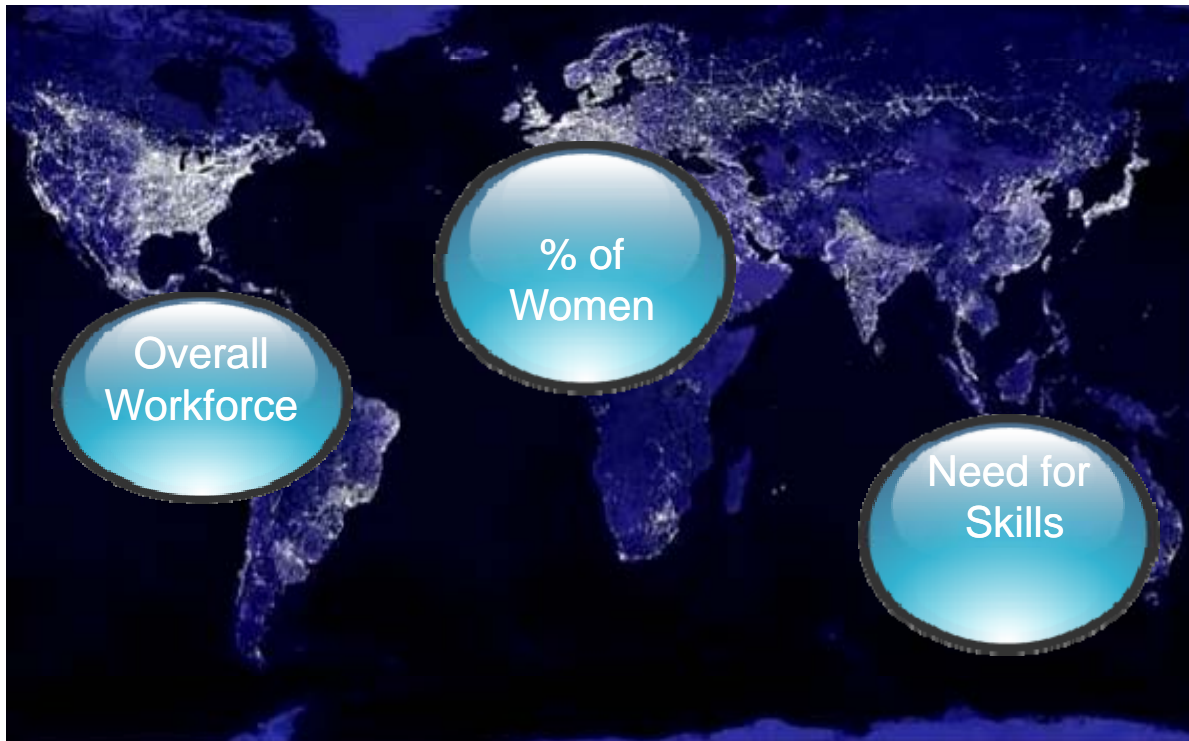
Before a deal



After a deal



1st Women's Issue – Education (early age)



**FEW ROLE MODELS
of leading female
professionals**

2nd issue for women -- not just in ICT

- Leadership
 - not many women in top positions
- Entrepreneurship
 - enabling women to go for it
- Workforce Development
 - develop to their full potential



conditions of women-led business

- Women are continuing to find it difficult to break into traditionally male dominated industries and positions – few women CEOs or executive managers;
- General lack of awareness of contribution and potential of women entrepreneurs;
- Social, cultural and economic factors hinder or limit women's entry into entrepreneurship;
- Communication gap between women entrepreneurs, policymakers, service providers and financial institutions;



what needs to be done?

- prepare women for the increasingly important role they will play in the Digital Economy;
- leverage existing resources to stay ahead of the rapidly changing technology environment;
- harness women's strength;
- build local but think global; and
- provide women with skills that lead to greater mobility, flexibility and economic sustainability.



What needs to be done?

- Increase opportunities for women & girls, especially in rural and remote areas through multi-stakeholder partnerships;
- Promote cross-sector collaboration on the strategic use of ICT for gender equality and human resource development;
- Build a regional infrastructure that supports collaborative & applied research and education for implementation and impact;
- Raise the profile of women's contributions through an integrated training, research, policy and evaluation framework;
- Advance the interests of the region & its people.



harnessing women's strength

- It's time to begin to rethink how we will work in the future;
- It's time to start working on these issues and stay ahead of the changing workforce environment;
- It's time to create policies and programs which build on regional strength and make full use of female talent pools.



women's strengths

Understanding the unique characteristics and motivations of females is **central** to building a sustainable economic future.

- Women communicate in different ways;
- Women start and run businesses in different sectors, develop different products, pursue different goals and structure their businesses and business processes in a different fashion;
- Women learn in different ways: gender-sensitive education improves the learning experience.



in today's economy women (and men) need meta capabilities

→ a combination life/career skills including technology skills; problem solving skills, initiative and enterprise skills; (time, team, self) management skills; collaboration, interpersonal and interactive communication skills

+

→ (e)business skills such as understanding the effective use of technology and new business models; importance of interactive communication and social networking



what are meta capabilities?

- **technology** -- skills that contribute to effective execution of tasks and link to the outside world;
- **communication** -- skills that contribute to productive and harmonious relations between business and customers;
- **initiative and enterprise** -- skills that contribute to entrepreneurship & innovative outcomes;
- **learning** -- skills that contribute to ongoing improvement and (if desired) expansion of operations and outcomes;
- **problem solving** -- skills that contribute to productive outcomes;
- **planning and organising** -- skills that contribute to long-term and short-term strategic planning;
- **self-management** -- skills that contribute to an appropriate work-life balance; and
- **team work** -- skills that contribute to productive working relationships outcomes.

progression through partnership

Way forward:

- Women-friendly business practices that takes context, culture, communication and women's well being into consideration;
- Fast-tracking of women into the digital economy;
- ICT-enabled women's employment and entrepreneurship directives;
- Gender integration into the workforce as a partnership between the public and private sectors;
- Contribution to building connectedness and developing stronger & sustainable (established and emerging) economies.
- A skilling program to boost meta-capabilities of women.



Thank you for your attention

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