



**GREAT  
WOMEN  
IN ASEAN**

*EMPOWERING WOMEN UP  
THE VALUE CHAIN*



**GREAT** is an acronym for:

**G**ender

**R**esponsive

**E**conomic

**A**ction for the

**T**ransformation of **WOMEN.**

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**GREAT Women  
in ASEAN**  
Empowering women up the value chain

**USAID'S ASEAN CONNECTIVITY  
THROUGH TRADE AND INVESTMENT  
(ACTI) PROJECT**

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# ONE REGION, ONE MARKET

The ten-countries of ASEAN are coming together as a single market under the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015. With a consumer base of over 600 million people and a production base that produces world-class goods and services, ASEAN is a valuable, dynamic market.

The GREAT Women in ASEAN initiative supports women entrepreneurs to make the most of the ASEAN Economic Community. This initiative is a collaborative effort between the ASEAN SME Agencies Working Group (SMEWG) and the U.S.-ASEAN Business Alliance for Competitive SMEs. The Business Alliance is an innovative public-private partnership, involving some 20 leading U.S. corporations from the US-ASEAN Business Council, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The GREAT Women in ASEAN initiative empowers women through mentoring and practical skills development. When women are economically-empowered, money flows back into businesses and towards the health, education, and wellbeing of families. Women in leadership likewise contribute to a more humane and compassionate society, towards a future that is more collaborative and more sustainable.

The GREAT Women in ASEAN initiative is also designed to take advantage of changing

trends in global markets. Consumers worldwide are rejecting commonplace, less eco-friendly and mass-produced goods and services. Consumers are willing to pay a premium for hand-made artisan products that support local communities, are environment-friendly (such as natural and organic food and other products), and have a strong emotional or cultural appeal.

The GREAT Women in ASEAN initiative strengthens skills and collaboration among women entrepreneurs. This fosters mutual exchanges and learning to continuously improve products that present the best of ASEAN and empowers women to be a powerful force for the development and transformation in our societies.

This is what the GREAT Women in ASEAN initiative is all about.

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## ASEAN Member Countries

Brunei Darussalam

Cambodia

Indonesia

Lao PDR

Malaysia

Myanmar

Philippines

Singapore

Thailand

Viet Nam



Founders of the Brands  
ECHOstore Sustainable Lifestyle  
and GREAT WOMEN [L-R]:  
Jeannie Javelosa, Regina Francisco,  
Pacita Juan



## THE BIRTH OF A WOMAN'S BRAND

The GREAT PHASE 1 Women initiative was started in the Philippines in 2006 and run by the Philippine Commission for Women. The goal of the initiative was to create an enabling environment for women micro-entrepreneurs through the support from national and local agencies, women's groups, and private sector partners.

The ECHOsi Foundation (Empowering Communities with Hope and Opportunities through Sustainable Initiatives) was one of the private sector partners. It faced great challenges





Photo Dariel Quioque

in sourcing products from small communities as the products that they made often lacked designs and features preferred by consumers. To address this, the ECHOsi Foundation launched development programs that drew in designers, retailers and lifestyle experts to help women artisans to improve their products.

To better market the improved products, ECHOsi Foundation created the GREAT WOMEN brand and now helps women entrepreneurs market their products locally and overseas both online and in specialty outlets.



Photo Regina Francisco



Photo Marvin Vergara



# ONE ASEAN, ONE WOMEN'S BRAND

*The GREAT WOMEN brand expresses the passion and spirit of every woman in ASEAN who keeps tradition alive. It signifies our commitment to the ideals that commerce with a purpose can make women's lives better and that women can help women to create sustainable households all across ASEAN.*

In March 2015, over 40 ASEAN women entrepreneurs seeking to promote women-owned businesses joined forces with the ASEAN SME Agencies Working Group (SMEWG), the U.S.-ASEAN Business Alliance for Competitive SMEs, and the ECHOsi Foundation to expand the GREAT WOMEN brand to all of Southeast Asia.

The new GREAT Women in ASEAN initiative supports a more inclusive regional economy under the ASEAN Economic Community. The initiative enables women entrepreneurs and artisans to take advantage of changing trends in regional and global markets through collaboration in the production, design and packaging of specialty products that have appeal in premium markets. GREAT WOMEN products bring to consumers the best collaborative fusion that ASEAN has to offer

One ASEAN, One brand: GREAT WOMEN.



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To ensure that GREAT WOMEN is meaningful to consumers and other buyers, the GREAT Women in ASEAN initiative is developing business guidelines and infrastructure to ensure that no matter where a product comes from, if it bears the GREAT WOMEN brand, it is of high quality and promotes sustainability and the style of ASEAN.



## THE GREAT WOMEN IN ASEAN INITIATIVE: **DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM**

*The GREAT Women in ASEAN initiative empowers women entrepreneurs to reach their full potential.*



## A PLATFORM FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The GREAT Women in ASEAN initiative supports the efforts of majority women-owned enterprises, women entrepreneurs and women artisans to add value to their products and services. The products also promote a women-helping-women approach to empowerment and reducing gender-based disparities in business.

## A PLATFORM TO PROTECT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

A core goal of the GREAT Women in ASEAN initiative is to ensure that the intellectual property rights of traditional manufacturers in their unique designs, patterns, and traditional cultural expressions are protected. Protection from unauthorized copying and piracy will ensure that our producers and artisans retain the full benefit of their intellectual property.

## A PLATFORM FOR BETTER MARKET ACCESS

The GREAT Women in ASEAN approach integrates all actors in the production process allows for the development of products and services that gives confidence to purchasers.

GREAT WOMEN products:

- Are made by artisans under fair-employment conditions
- Honor cultural traditions and processes
- Are manufactured sustainably, through the use of natural and/or organic materials
- Follow traceability guidelines
- Are sourced following fair-trade practices

## A PLATFORM FOR SKILLS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Training and mentoring programs are being developed by the GREAT Women in ASEAN initiative to help bridge development gaps across value and supply chains. These gaps may be financial, legal, logistical, ecological, or technological.



# THE GREAT WOMEN IN ASEAN INITIATIVE: **THE PRODUCTS**

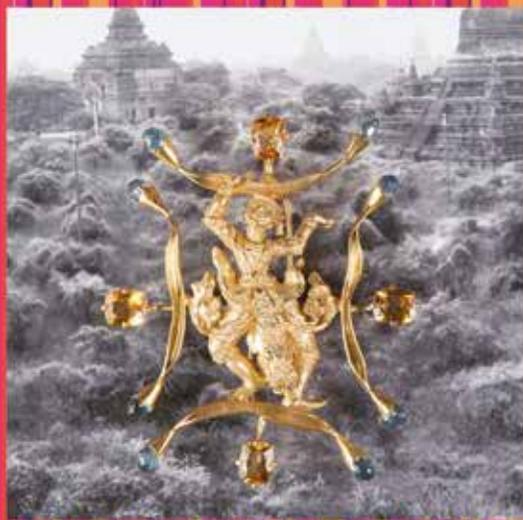






# GREAT WOMEN IN ASEAN

*Empowering women up the value chain*



*The GREAT Women in ASEAN initiative links women retailers, producers, and artisans to reach regional and global markets for premium products while empowering women and sustaining culture and traditions.*



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

