

# INSPIRING ASEAN WOMEN IN IP



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# FOREWORD MESSAGE FROM THE EU DELEGATION TO ASEAN



EUROPEAN UNION  
DELEGATION TO ASEAN



## FOREWORD

Human beings have used their imagination to build our world for centuries. Intellectual property (IP) is an essential tool that protects and supports creativity. However, evidence shows that fewer women use the IP system than men. Within ASEAN, women are significantly less involved in registering intellectual property rights (IPR) and working in innovative industries. This has far-reaching consequences as the less women use the IP system, the less they benefit from it legally and economically, and the world may lose many great ideas and diverse perspectives.

By closing the gender gap in IP, we can ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to contribute their ideas and creativity to the world, which will bring numerous benefits to society, the economy, and culture.

To encourage and empower women in the ASEAN region to take on significant roles and engage actively in the IP system, we've created the "Women in Intellectual Property" e-magazine. The publication highlights unique stories of women who are inventors, entrepreneurs, involved in IP policy-making, leaders of community-based industries, or researchers creating ground-breaking IP.

This inspiring e-magazine provides an opportunity to learn from the success stories of women who've utilized IP or engaged in the IP system. It covers the challenges faced and provides advice on how to overcome them, and valuable insights from their IP journey. By reading these stories, we can gain knowledge and inspiration about using IP for businesses and individuals to grow ideas and protect inventions from infringement or misuse.

We're grateful to the IP offices in the ASEAN countries for their contributions to the "Women in Intellectual Property" e-magazine. We hope it inspires and empowers women in IP, closes the gender gap in the use of the IP system, and opens new possibilities to all generations.

Thank you to all our amazing readers, no matter your field or role in IP. We believe these stories will give you inspiration to create your own successful IP journey.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Igor Driesmans'.

Igor Driesmans  
Ambassador

# INTRODUCTION TO THE SITUATION OF **WOMEN IN ASEAN** AND ITS RELATION TO **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

**While Intellectual Property (IP) is a key driver of innovation and economic growth, data shows too few women are participating in the IP system. Only 16.5% of inventors named in international patent applications were women, highlighting a gender gap in IP that exists worldwide. Actions toward bridging this gap are needed, or the world will continue to lose out on the full potential of women's ideas and innovations.**

## **Existence of the gender gap in IP**

Intellectual property (IP) is a key driver for innovation and economic growth. It grants creators and inventors exclusive rights over their work, stimulating investment in research and development and enabling the development of new technologies, products, and services. IP-intensive industries play an essential role in the economy and provide sustainable and valuable jobs for society.

Overall, the IP system has been established in the first place to encourage the formation and growth of new businesses. The system, however, is not used equally by everyone. Certain countries and regions outperform others when it comes to registering IP, and there are also significant disparities between men and women when it comes to registering and owning IP rights. The existing data shows that fewer women use the IP system as compared to men to protect their work and innovation.

Statistics from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) show that women inventor's share in international patent applications was 16.5% in 2021. When looking specifically at ASEAN Member States, the corresponding figures were 9.4% for Indonesia, 37.7% for the Philippines, 15.4% for Singapore, 26.3% for Thailand, and 24.5% for Viet Nam.<sup>1</sup>

The gendered gap in the IP system that exists worldwide and in ASEAN concerns us all. Gender equality is, of course, a stated human right and a necessary foundation for sustainable and equitable growth, as described in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG5). Therefore, any inequality that we face, such as inequality in the potential utilization of the IP system, prevents us from accessing a large proportion of society and the potential cultural, social, and economic benefits that they may bring.

The lost innovations, brands and ideas are a detriment to society as a whole, and therefore, encouraging access to the IP system and the benefits that it brings has great potential value for the global economy.

<sup>1</sup> WIPO IP Statistics Data Center, Indicator 15 - Share of women inventors (yearly statistics), <https://www3.wipo.int/ipstats>

# Why are women less involved in IPR-intensive industries and IP registration?

One of the key issues of why women are less involved in IPR-intensive industries and IP registration is the prejudices and misconceptions concerning women and their role in society. These prejudice and misconceptions often limit them to traditional roles rather than leaders in commerce, business, science, technology, and the arts, according to an expert panel hosted by WIPO in 2017.<sup>2</sup> Even though time has passed since this conference, the same issues are still valid nowadays.

**“ With 16% of girls marrying before the age of 18 and 30% of females noting an increase in their domestic work/responsibilities since 2019<sup>3</sup>, proving that the traditionally preconceived role of women remains a major barrier towards innovation in ASEAN. ”**

IP registrations and the commercialization of IP can often be expensive without the guarantee of financial success. There is an argument that women will often prioritize, the stability of their income, therefore making them more risk averse and less likely to pursue careers in entrepreneurship and innovation.

Another issue highlighted during the WIPO expert panel is the lack of policymaking that promotes innovation and creativity among women and puts them in a position to succeed. In fact, policymaking still remains an issue within ASEAN, as only 20% of parliament members in ASEAN are women, with only 24% of middle and senior managers being female throughout the region<sup>4</sup>. Policies to improve female innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship should be done at the hands of female policymakers, or at the very least with their input, and thus this remains a major barrier to female innovation in ASEAN.

Another barrier that may exist would be a lack of funding for women to pursue IPR protection themselves or to pursue funding in IPR-intensive industries. In the biomedical field, ASEAN's largest contributor to patent protection, funding for women grant winners was lower as a whole in general, and even when women did win grants and other research prizes, on average they received a striking 24% less when compared to male award winners<sup>5</sup>. Even moving fields to high-technology start-ups<sup>6</sup>, another industry that is a great contributor to IPR filings, we find the difference even more abhorrent, as in 2020 only 2.3% of venture capital funding went to women-led start-ups.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.wipo.int/women-and-ip/en/news/2017/news\\_0003.html](https://www.wipo.int/women-and-ip/en/news/2017/news_0003.html)

<sup>3</sup> <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/The-ASEAN-April-May-2021-Issue.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> <https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/how-big-is-the-gender-gap-in-science-research-funding>

<sup>6</sup> <https://hbr.org/2021/02/women-led-startups-received-just-2-3-of-vc-funding-in-2020>

# Spotlight inspiring women who have made their mark in the world of IP

Despite the gender gap that still exists, there are many inspiring women who have made their mark in the world of IP in the ASEAN Region. This e-magazine is an empowering resource that aims to encourage women to take on significant roles and actively engage in the IP system.

Inside these pages, we spotlight ten unique stories of different women with their narrative of success, challenges, and insights. From ground-breaking inventors to community leaders and policymakers, these women have paved the way for others to follow, demonstrating the importance of IP in shaping our world.

Through their journeys, you can learn about the challenges they have faced and the advice they have for overcoming obstacles. You will learn how to grow your ideas and protect your inventions from infringement or misuse.

Join us as we pay attention to the voices of women who have made an impact in the IP field and discover how they have navigated their way to success. Turn to the next page and let this e-magazine be your guide to unlocking your potential and entering the IP world.

**INSPIRING  
ASEAN  
WOMEN IN IP**

Category

**POLICY  
MAKERS**

# Norazizah Jaafar



## Policymaker who has been behind Brunei Darussalam’s IP development for over three decades

“IP affects various aspects of life.” said Norazizah Jaafar, the Head/Deputy Registrar of the Intellectual Property Office of Brunei Darussalam (BrulPO). Over almost three decades working in the field of IP, she has witnessed the evolution of IP from its early days to the present.



## The Significance of IP

Back in the 1990s, IP development only involved basic registration and advisory work and was not well known to many. Fast forward to today, IP is a key player in driving economic growth and innovation in a vast array of areas, from technology and culture to art and innovation.

BrulPO aims to assist people in reaching independence and awareness in IP utilization. Managing IP effectively and developing practical tools is crucial for ensuring that progress is not hindered and that everyone has access to its benefits, especially in emerging areas like business model innovation and social and community-based innovation.

Though it was not always clear at first how to handle certain IP issues, BrulPO has been working hard to provide as much comprehensive training as possible to its staff to build local expertise and collaborate with regional groups to find the best practices and solutions for developing an effective IP system.

Norazizah believes that the success of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) is a crucial driver of inclusive economic growth, with digitalization being a key tool in boosting competitiveness. Ultimately, IP protects the interests of both businesses and consumers by striking a balance that promotes innovation while ensuring that products and services meet the highest standards.

**“ It is crucial to recognize the significance of IP and work towards its effective management to ensure a vibrant and innovative society. ”**

## Unlocking Opportunities for Women in IP

Norazizah stated that measuring gender-specific impact is challenging, and this has been further complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, it is essential to develop practical, accurate, and effective tools for measuring gender-specific impacts to close the gender gap.

She believes that equal access to education and career opportunities, whether in IP or any other industry, has always been available to everyone, regardless of gender. Yet, there is still a mindset and ideology towards gender-related issues that are influenced by cultural factors, which is known that it cannot be changed overnight and will need long-term efforts to sustain diversity and inclusivity.

“ **If we look back into history, men were more acknowledged, but now the times are slowly changing, and we need to acknowledge this and actively target what we, as women, would like to achieve.** ”



Norazizah believes that women have the ability and accessibility to play an active role in growing and pursuing their innovations and businesses through IP protection. **Bridging the gender gap is not just about empowering women but also involving men in the conversation.** Women can help society as a whole, and everyone benefits from a diverse and inclusive community.

She shared that BrulPO has been providing IP advisory services to small businesses which are run by women entrepreneurs. Over the years, specific entrepreneurial programmes and activities for women have been conducted by various agencies and entities in Brunei Darussalam as part of the effort to empower women and diversify the economy.

Norazizah is excited with the fact that the focus for this year's World IP Day is on women. She believes that there is a need to support women and identify where the gender gap matters. She thinks that a long-term solution is needed, and **“Changing the mindset of both men and women is necessary to ensure that women can participate fully in all aspects of life”.**

# Dr. Moe Moe Thwe

**Woman IP pioneer sparks IP awareness in Myanmar, making an impact on aspiring women entrepreneurs**



**With over 20 years of experience in the IP field, Dr. Moe Moe Thwe, the Head of the Department of Intellectual Property in Myanmar, is a leading expert on IP, and her efforts have influenced entrepreneurship, particularly among women.**

**Dr. Moe Moe's IP journey from beginning to leading expert**

Dr. Moe Moe's journey in IP began in 2004 when Myanmar at that time had to implement, as a least developed country (LDC), the minimum standards of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, following its membership to the World Trade Organisation in 1995, and later to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 2001. Reviewing the current IP protection in Myanmar and drafting IP Laws was of great priority at that time.

By then, Dr. Moe Moe had just finished her degree in material engineering from the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. Her biggest challenge was that she wasn't an IP lawyer and had only a basic understanding of trade marks and patents. Nevertheless, this did not deter her from taking on the challenge.

In 2004, Dr. Moe Moe was appointed as the head of the WIPO session established under the Ministry of Science and Technology. Her responsibility was to draft IP laws in four areas, including patents, industrial designs, copyrights, and trade marks. She studied and drafted the laws simultaneously. The discussions and drafting of the laws went on for two years, and the framework and policy for IPR regulations were submitted in 2006 by the Ministry of Law and the Ministry of Science and Technology.

However, Myanmar faced challenges, with the country still being considered a least developed country and not quite ready for policy implementation. As a result, the implementation was delayed until 2013, and it wasn't until 2015 that the laws were finally submitted and tabled in the parliament. The IPR law was relatively new to the parliament, and people didn't have a deep knowledge of it, which also posed a challenge for Dr. Moe Moe's team.

To overcome this, the team had to focus on sharing knowledge and answering questions to educate the people. Eventually, in 2019, four IPR laws were established successfully, including the Patent and General IP laws.

## Empowering Women in IP and Innovation : Bridging the Gap in Myanmar



Although there are various opportunities for women to become innovators, there is still a lack of knowledge and protection of IP rights among people in Myanmar. According to Dr. Moe Moe, “The current status of women aware of IP in Myanmar is still in need of improvement. We need to encourage more women to gather knowledge in IP and understand how it can benefit them.”

Promoting women's participation in IP and innovation is crucial for the development of the country. Several educational programs have been established, such as the Myanmar Women Entrepreneurship Association. The aim is to raise IP awareness that targets women specifically in order to help them better understand the benefits of IP protection and encourage them to innovate.

However, more support is needed, including mentoring and networking opportunities, to help women gain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the field of IP and innovation. Creating an environment that is supportive of women's ideas and provides them with the resources and opportunities they need to succeed requires a collaborative effort from all stakeholders.

While women in Myanmar have faced challenges in becoming leaders and entrepreneurs due to societal expectations that limit their role to that of housewives, increasing education has enabled some women to break through these barriers and become successful entrepreneurs. It is important for these women to understand the value of IP protection in growing their businesses.

“It is encouraging that universities in Myanmar are now teaching about IP and innovation, and information is freely available for SMEs in various sectors”, Dr. Moe Moe noted. Technology Information Support Centers as well as Technology Transfer Offices, especially in universities, can provide women with the resources they need to pursue innovation. Shared knowledge from the government and the internet has made SMEs in Myanmar more knowledgeable than ever before.

The gender ratio in education is relatively equal, with women aiming to be more educated. However, women still face socio-economic factors that limit their opportunities to become innovators. Support is needed to help women develop an innovator mindset and pursue their ideas, no matter where they come from. It is important for women to believe in themselves and their abilities, as they have the potential to create and innovate in their own unique ways.

As Dr. Moe Moe aptly puts it,

**“ Something is better than nothing. Women are also human beings; it doesn't matter your education or your status, but your hand can shake the well and figure out a solution. You can be an IP owner and future innovator. Women have high thinking skills balanced out with their hearts and brains. ”**



# Winnie Tham

## Prominent IP lawyer who contributed to the advancement of Singapore's IP legal system

Winnie Tham would be best described as a "visionary" and "passionate" leader. Since she co-founded AMICA Law with a vision for the potential of IP, the firm and her support have helped companies and society take the leap into expansion.



## Winnie's early days in IP

Winnie's interest in pursuing IP law was sparked by her fascination with the intersection between the two fields of law and science. She was urged to enter the IP field after education and found the work and cases in the IP sphere to be very interesting and fulfilling. She enjoys dealing with new brands and products involving a host of IP rights, including patents, trade marks, copyright, and industrial designs.

The landscape of IP law in Singapore has changed significantly since Winnie first started practicing in the field. The new Patents Act in 1995 required attorneys who were skilled in patent drafting and prosecution to handle the technical complexities of inventions. This proved challenging as the patent profession was starting from scratch, pushing the industry to evolve.

"It took a decade or more to develop the patent infrastructure that we have today, and it is one of the key requirements to ensure that IP remains a valuable and essential aspect of innovation in the modern world", said Winnie. "Being in the field of IP law has brought me to see the direct and long-term impacts of IP protection and its effects on the growth of many SMEs", she added.



Winnie eventually went on to co-found AMICA Law with a group of her closest colleagues while taking a more active role in the growth of IP in her work in associations such as Asian Patent Attorneys Association (APAA), International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property (AIPPI), and International Trademark Association (INTA) and as a Board Member at the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS).

Winnie and the firm's expertise and experience not only help clients strategize for commercialization, allowing them to dream big and prepare accordingly on the business side, but also increase IP awareness so that businesses understand the core benefits of being protected by IP and how to utilize it.



## Navigating IP in Singapore : Overcoming the Challenges

Winnie finds the IP industry in Singapore to be an exciting and dynamic field. As the economy in the country has been steadily growing over the past few years, the demand for IP protection has also been on the rise.

**"IP practices are closely tied to the economic growth and development of a country," she said. "A thriving economy encourages innovation and the development of new technologies, leading to an increase in patent and trade mark applications."**

The government has also recognized the importance of IP in driving innovation and economic growth and has implemented policies and initiatives to promote the creation, protection, and exploitation of IP.

However, challenges still remain. Although companies recognize the importance of IP protection, SMEs often struggle to invest in it and may not have the necessary knowledge and expertise in-house, leaving them vulnerable to IP infringement and struggling to compete with larger and more established players in the market.

Winnie understands the challenges companies face. Part of her work is to help clients navigate these challenges and formulate a feasible IP strategy that adds value to the company.

## Breaking Barriers : Women Opportunity for Growth in the Future of IP

Winnie noted that women are well-represented in the IP profession in Singapore, including at senior partner and management levels. However, she acknowledges that there are still challenges for women in the field, especially in building a sustainable career and managing a good work-life balance. Flexible work arrangements, support, and awareness in the workplace help tremendously.

In other areas, such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields, there are greater challenges with a lower number of women. This could be due to various reasons, such as few role models, gender stereotypes, and a more male-dominated culture.

On the legal front, she hopes to see more women involved in IP law and commercialization and become successful in the field.

"It is essential to have an open-door policy and to match young lawyers with mentors", she added. Senior female lawyers, law committees, and IP associations all play a vital role in connecting young lawyers with mentors and providing networking opportunities to learn from others. Having visibility of role models in IP respectively has really helped in increasing the engagement and interest for even more women to pursue IP related career paths.

As a member of several IP associations that focus on women in the profession, Winnie advocates for and contributes to supporting women in the IP field, helping create and mentor the future of the next generation of women IP policymakers, law consultants, and many more.

She believes that having a written policy that encourages a supportive and inclusive workplace culture is vital for creating a work environment that is welcoming to women. Women can also benefit from attending women's IP events, joining chat groups, and referring to written policies to help set the tone and culture for their organizations.

Active efforts from the IP Office and IP law firms are now showing results, with more female representation in the patent examination program and 30% of women on IPOS's Board of Directors. Singapore is undoubtedly making strides towards gender equality in the industry.

Winnie shared a kind reminder for all women in IP to enjoy their work and colleagues and to take an interest in learning and innovating.

**"It's not just about putting in the hours, but also about finding fulfilment and satisfaction in the work you do".**

By embracing continuous learning and growth opportunities and collaborating with others, individuals can establish successful and fulfilling careers in the vibrant field of IP.

# **INSPIRING ASEAN WOMEN IN IP**

Category

# **ENTREPRENEURS**

# Nichada Suriyacharearn

**Passion for preserving traditional Lamphun Brocade Thai Silk inspires dedicated local leader to strengthen weaving communities by Geographical Indication protection**

When Nichada Suriyacharearn, the founder of the Institute of Hariphunchai Hand-woven Cloth, learned the potential of GI, she turned it into a formidable shield to safeguard the long-history Lamphun Brocade Thai Silk and support local weavers, bringing wildly increased recognition and economic benefits for the traditional weaving industry.



## From Traditional Weaving to Renowned GI Product

It was in 1972 that Nichada Suriyacharearn began her career as a civil servant, working as the permanent secretary of Lamphun province in Thailand, a province known for its rich cultural heritage and traditional hand weaving. She is also the founder of the Institute of Hariphunchai Hand-woven Cloth, the learning center for woven cloth in Lamphun.

As Nichada explained, "We have a long history of many cultural heritages, but one of the most famous things in Lamphun is silk hand weaving. It's a very traditional craft that has been passed down through generations."

For years, she saw first-hand the cultural importance of traditional hand weaving in Lamphun, but it was not until Geographical Indication (GI) right was introduced to her in 2007 that it became a serious focus for her. She admitted that she didn't know much about the concept of GI before it was introduced to the weavers by the Department of Intellectual Property (DIP) of Thailand.

**"At first, I didn't understand what a GI was and how it could benefit our weavers", Nichada recalled. "But as I learned more about it, I realized that it could help to protect our traditional weaves and ensure that they are recognized as unique and authentic Lamphun products. It is important for our weavers to protect their products and ensure that they are not copied or imitated by others".**

With this newfound understanding of IP and GI, Nichada became passionate about promoting and protecting the unique weaves of Lamphun Brocade Thai Silk. She works to raise awareness of the GI among weavers as well as educate consumers about the value of authentic, handmade Lamphun Brocade Thai Silk.

However, it took 4-5 years of concerted effort to get people on board with the concept of GI and its benefits for the weavers. "We had to educate people about what GI meant and how it could protect our weavers and their products", Nichada explained. "It was a long process, but eventually we were able to raise awareness and get more people interested in promoting and protecting our traditional weaves."

With the help of Nichada's efforts to promote GI registration, the Lamphun Brocade Thai Silk gained recognition both nationally and internationally for its unique qualities and cultural significance. As a result, this has not only generated financial prospects for local communities but also helped in conserving and promoting traditional weaving practices and cultural heritage.



## Preserving Lamphun's Heritage : How GI Protects Traditional Hand-Woven Products

From a few entrepreneurs who started the initiative to apply for GI protection for their products in 2007, Lamphun province became the pioneer of GI-protected products in Thailand, setting a new standard for the industry. Hundreds of weavers have been trained to produce high-quality hand-woven products in compliance with the GI standards.

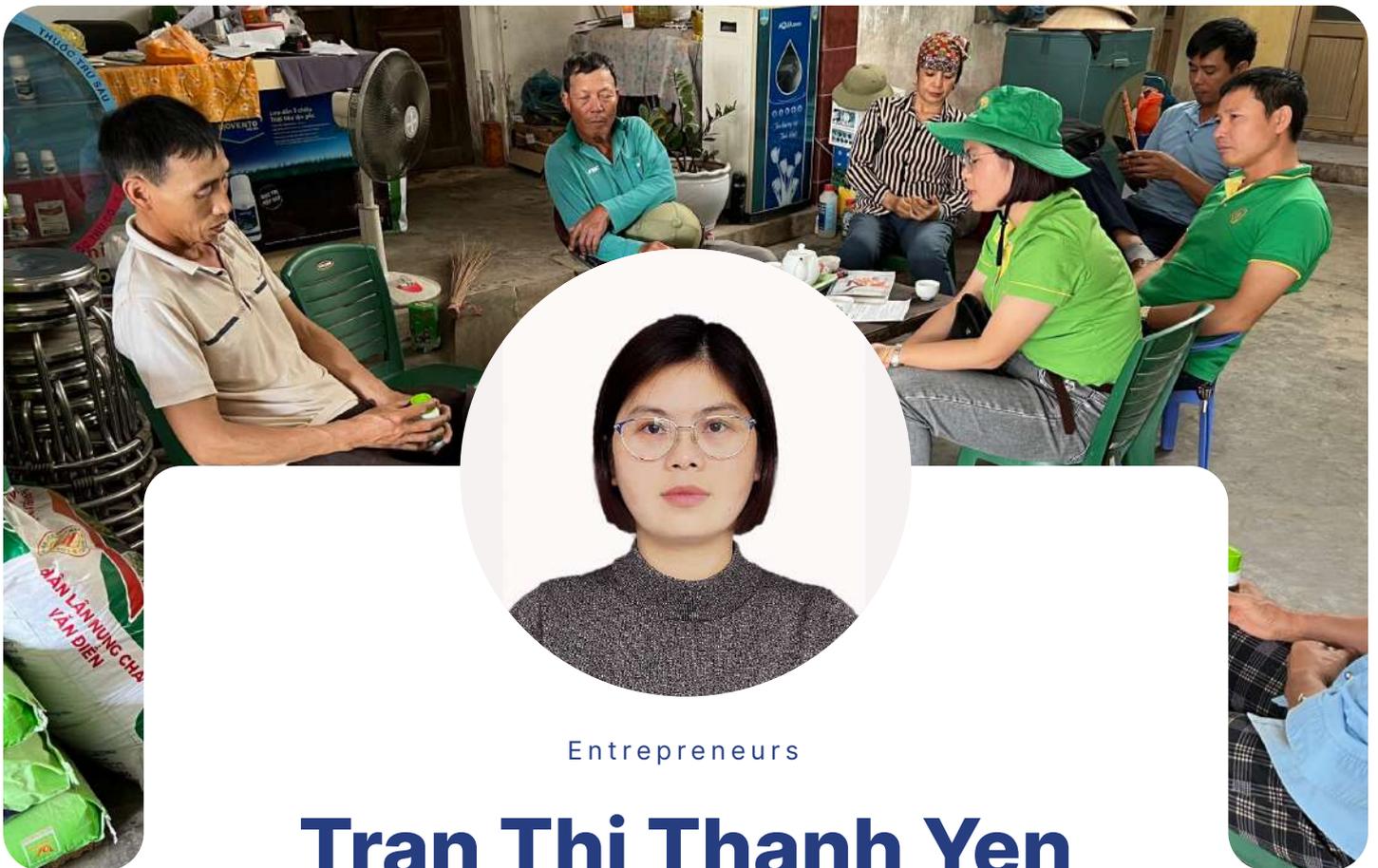
"GI has helped the weavers and government set a standardized quality and price for these products, placing them in a category and league of their own," Nichada said. The introduction of GI protection in Lamphun province has not only safeguarded the unique and authentic hand-woven products from imitation but also increased their market value and improved the quality of livelihood for the women involved in the process, which has resulted in more economic benefits for the local community.

Through her work, Nichada has become a champion for women entrepreneurs in Thailand, empowering them to take ownership of their craft. As a former permanent secretary and a female leader in Lamphun province, she has shattered stereotypes and proven that women can be equally successful in traditionally male-dominated fields. More than 80% of weavers in Lamphun province are women, and Nichada believes that they can achieve great success by simply looking for opportunities around themselves and having faith in their abilities.

**"With hard work, determination, and a strong will, anyone can accomplish their dreams, regardless of their gender."**

Nichada's story is a testament to the fact that gender should never be a barrier to success. Her achievements paved the way for women to believe in themselves and pursue their passions with conviction, serving as a beacon of hope for future generations.





Entrepreneurs

# Tran Thi Thanh Yen

**From farming to IP raising awareness in Viet Nam, empowering entrepreneurs to innovate through IP**

Tran Thi Thanh Yen, Technical Chief at ADI Agriculture Development and Trading Investment JSC, is a prime example of a woman who has broken barriers in IP through her utilization and implementation. Through her own online research, she familiarized herself with IP and transformed it into a powerful tool, inspiring numerous entrepreneurs to also harness the power of IP.

## IP-Driven Growth and Innovation

Tran Thi Thanh Yen's IP journey started around 20 years ago, when ADI Agriculture Development and Trading Investment JSC was still a relatively new company. Her understanding of IP began with her own research on the internet. Her growing fascination with IP led her to delve deeper into the field, and she eventually assisted the firm in filing and managing its IP portfolio.

"IP has brought more entities to the company, including partners and investors who are interested in protecting new products," she said. "It has also helped protect the company's customers, who rely on its products."

She also emphasized the need for educating others in the company about the value of IP. From farmers to suppliers, all stakeholders should understand how important it is to implement IP practices and the benefits that could be gained in terms of market share and product differentiation.

Yen's expertise in IP has allowed her company to achieve significant milestones in protecting their products and become a market leader. The company has registered more than 100 brands of plant protection products, which shows their commitment to ensuring the quality and safety of the products. This is one of the examples of how IP plays an important role in driving innovation and growth in today's competitive business landscape.

## Empowering Entrepreneurs in IP

As the increased IP awareness has allowed her business to expand into new markets and launch IP-protected innovative products, Yen encourages other entrepreneurs to take advantage of the resources available and to register for IP protection as soon as possible to ensure that their ideas and innovations are safeguarded in the marketplace.

“There are many resources available for those looking to improve their IP knowledge, including industry conferences, webinars, and training programs,” she noted. By staying up-to-date on the latest developments and best practices in IP, entrepreneurs have been able to stay ahead of the curve and protect their innovations in a rapidly changing market.

The ease of accessibility and hybrid registration system in Viet Nam is a positive development for businesses and individuals looking to protect their IP. Yen personally completed the process of registering for trade mark protection by herself, highlighting the simplicity of the process and the accessibility of information.

“The Vietnamese government has made it easy for individuals and businesses to register for IP protection with a centralized system that allows for both online and offline registration,” she added.

Over time, however, Yen noticed that the cost of IP practices has increased, making it more challenging for smaller companies and farmers to implement them. To address this issue, she has been working to develop cost-effective IP strategies that can be tailored to different types of businesses and industries.



## Strengthening Women in IP

Yen believes that women participation in IP is essential to driving innovation and creativity in the field. Nonetheless, she acknowledges that there remain challenges. While policies in Viet Nam provide relatively equal opportunities for women, socio-economic status and cultural expectations can impact a woman's ability to pursue opportunities through and with IP.

“The most difficult challenge of having more women empowering through IP is not the awareness of the importance of IP, but rather the resources and support available to help women juggle multiple responsibilities,” she explained.

She shared that the government in Viet Nam has conducted several meetings for companies and organizations, resulting in increased awareness of IP, particularly in trade marks and industrial designs. She believes that these meetings should continue and be expanded to reach more women entrepreneurs and innovators, as well as provide more flexible work arrangements, mentoring opportunities, and access to training programs to help them succeed in the field.

She actively encourages women to protect and enhance the value of their work through use of the IP system. Her closing advice for women in IP is to recognize their potential in business and establish a strong business identity.

**“By recognizing and valuing their IP, women entrepreneurs and innovators can expand their market reach and build a sustainable business.”**

Ultimately, by encouraging women to utilize the IP system, the country can achieve a more inclusive and diverse innovation ecosystem, contributing to the growth and development of the economy as a whole.

# Arlin Chondro

## Natural health products entrepreneur harnesses IP protection for business expansion

**Arlin Chondro, CEO and founder of Peek.Me Naturals, initially didn't realize how important IP was for her business. Today, IP is one of the crucial strategies to grow her business. "Learn the benefits of IP in many aspects and fully utilize them," said Arlin to the female entrepreneurs out there.**



## Arlin's Journey from Entrepreneur to IP Protection

Arlin's journey with Peek.Me Naturals, a health care social enterprise in Indonesia, started as a mother's search for a steroid-free and safe alternative therapy for her child's asthma and allergies. This search led her into the world of essential oils as an alternative form of therapy.

After obtaining an international certificate as an aromatherapist, Arlin began formulating effective blends for various health issues and went on to establish Peek.Me Naturals in 2016. Her focus was on creating natural health products that could help people. She never considered long-term business strategies for growth and legal protections.

"At the time, I didn't think to actually apply for HAKI," Arlin admitted. "It didn't cross my mind that it was important." HAKI, or Hak Kekayaan Intelektual, is the Indonesian term for IP rights, including patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets, all of which can be important for protecting a business's ideas and products.

Despite this lack of initial awareness about IP, Arlin's business has grown over the years, which brought her to her first engagement with IP when she participated in the Blibli business competition. All finalists were given the opportunity and support to apply for HAKI in Indonesia. "It wasn't a requirement, but it was a perk that they gave," Arlin explained.

Arlin recalled that some of the other participants in the competition faced challenges during or before the competition because they hadn't protected their brand and products and were later sued by larger companies that had similar assets as them. These examples played a large part in understanding how important IP was for entrepreneurs.

Through Blibli's support on the IP application, Arlin was given a form to fill out for HAKI to register her logo and brand name. The process after submitting the form actually needed quite an individual touch, meaning that Arlin had to navigate the rest of the process on her own.

Since then, Arlin has already registered two other brands in HAKI. She notes that the process is now much easier to use than it was in 2016, when she had to register in person. "Now, everything is done online," she said.



## Challenges in IP Accessibility and Entrepreneurial Growth in Indonesia

As Arlin navigated the process of protecting her brand through IP rights, she also had the opportunity to engage with other entrepreneurs across Indonesia. "While most entrepreneurs in Indonesia use IP to protect their products, they aren't actually aware of the benefits of IP and don't fully utilize them to get the most out of IP."

Arlin noted that the IP processes in Indonesia mainly revolve around registering brands in HAKI. This narrow focus on registration often overlooks the potential for calculating IP value, acquiring IP, or developing a business growth strategy based on IP. Moreover, while Arlin, as an entrepreneur, was able to navigate the process herself, many people in STEM fields, where high-level IP protections such as patents are often crucial, face a significant knowledge gap in this area.

Despite these challenges, Arlin noted that more e-commerce platforms are making HAKI a prerequisite for brands to sell on their platforms. This means that more entrepreneurs are becoming aware of the importance of IP protections and taking steps to safeguard their brands and products.

As an entrepreneur, Arlin acknowledged that there's quite a significant gap in IP knowledge between those who have easy access and those who do not, particularly women in rural areas and low-income households. She pointed out that for them, the issue is not only about understanding and accessing IP but also about having a growth mindset for their businesses.

She also observed that even among business owners in cities, there are still many of them who aren't exactly thinking about expanding their businesses but rather focus on day-to-day survival. The government can play a crucial role in helping Indonesian entrepreneurs pursue growth. By encouraging them to apply for HAKI from the beginning, they can have something that they can hold on to, which becomes a separate motivation to continue to work and grow their businesses.

"Even for those who have access, it can be challenging to get the right information," Arlin pointed out. The gap in digital literacy and language skills can make it difficult to search for relevant information online. She highlighted that the availability of IP information is not common, and its importance in itself is not yet a priority for many parties currently active in and contributing to the industry.

Furthermore, Arlin expressed concern about the existence of a "black market" for IP, such as the transactions of domains. She stressed the need for greater awareness and education about IP protection to prevent such practices. Overall, Arlin believes that there is still much work to be done in bridging the gap in IP accessibility in Indonesia, particularly for those in rural areas and low-income households.

## **Bridging the IP Gap : Finding Support and Shared Knowledge Through Entrepreneurial Communities in Indonesia**

For Arlin, being involved in various business and entrepreneurial communities has been a key contributor to her growth as an entrepreneur. She actively seeks out opportunities for learning and development and has found great value in incubation and acceleration programs such as Instellar, DBS Bootcamp for Social Enterprises, and the Entrepreneur's Organization Accelerator. One of the communities that has been particularly impactful for Arlin is E-Trade for Women, a program by the UN that aims to provide equal access for women in digital-based trade.

Other communities that have been instrumental in Arlin's entrepreneurial journey is UKM Indonesia, led by Mba Dewi Meisari; and Melati Nusantara which was initiated by ASYX and UNCDF. UKM Indonesia is focused on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia and provides a wealth of resources and connections for entrepreneurs like Arlin. Whereas, Melati Nusantara offers free training modules for entrepreneurs, and it is available in Bahasa Indonesia, which makes it more accessible to a wider range of entrepreneurs.

For Arlin, joining these communities has not only provided her with valuable knowledge and resources but has also allowed her to share her expertise in IP with other entrepreneurs and build a supportive network. Through these connections, she has been able to collaborate on new projects, gain insights and advice from others in the industry, and grow her business in ways that would not have been possible on her own.

She emphasized that “it is important for entrepreneurs to have access to these types of resources and communities, particularly those in underserved or marginalized communities who may not have access to traditional business support systems.”

Arlin shared her thoughts for other female entrepreneurs out there,

**“Focus on what we can control today and not worry too much about the uncertainties of tomorrow. As entrepreneurs, you may face challenges and setbacks, but it's important to keep moving forward and take advantage of the opportunities available to you today.”**

Let us learn from Arlin's experiences and be inspired to join communities and seek out resources that can support our growth and success.





Entrepreneurs

# Chen Mom

**Through hard work and dedication, a stone artisan has become an inspiration for breaking barriers in a sector consisting mainly of men.**

**From a construction worker to a stone artisan at Artisans Angkor in Cambodia, Chen Mom not only reflects her power of perseverance and determination through intricate stone carvings but also paves the way for future generations of women to break down barriers and pursue their passions.**

## A Humble Beginning as a Stone Artisan

Her journey started with a simple construction job before the company she worked for eventually became Artisans Angkor, a Cambodian semi-public social business located in Siem Reap, whose twin goals are creating job opportunities for impoverished young people in rural areas while reviving traditional Khmer craftsmanship. Little did Chen know that this job would be the catalyst for her career as an artisan.

"I used to work as a construction worker for the company," Chen recalled. "But one day, I heard that the company was recruiting for the opening of Artisans Angkor. They were looking for artisans who could work on sandstone and statues, and I was interested."

Chen applied for the position and was accepted as an artisan. From there, she began working on sandstone statues and heads, quickly developing a passion for the art form. Over the years, Chen has honed her skills and become a masterful artisan, able to create intricate and beautiful pieces of art from stone. "I love working with stone," she said. "It's challenging, but also very rewarding. Each piece is unique, and I enjoy the process of bringing it to life."

Chen has been working as a stone artisan at Artisans Angkor for the past 20 years. She has persevered and become a respected member of the team, as her journey is a testament to the power of perseverance and the importance of following your passions.

## Women's Opportunities in the Artisan Industry /sector in Cambodia

As a woman working in a male-dominated activity, Chen understands the challenges that women face when trying to enter the workforce. In Cambodia, many women feel that careers in fields like artisanry are more suitable for men only, due to the heavy lifting and physical tools involved. As a result, there aren't many women artisans in the industry, and most artisans at Artisans Angkor are men.

"Many women are interested in what I do and admire my work as an artisan," she said. "But as they learn more about the career, they realize that the path is a hard one."

Despite the challenges, Chen encourages women to pursue careers in artisanry if they have a passion for it. While artisanry may not be for everyone, there are other opportunities for women to work in Cambodia.

"Women in Cambodia are working in a variety of roles," Chen said. "Some are working in factories, some are running their own businesses, and some are pursuing careers in fields like artisanry or sewing. There are opportunities out there, but we have to be willing to work hard and pursue our passions."



## The Rewards of Artisanship :

### Chen's Fulfilling Career at Artisans Angkor and the Need for IP Awareness

Chen finds fulfilment in her work as an artisan, focusing on planning and producing sandstone statues and heads. Additionally, working at Artisans Angkor has given her many benefits, deriving from the social approach of the organization shareholders, in particular France's VINCI Group, which include very suitable working conditions and insurance coverage that gives artisans peace of mind, knowing that they're protected in case of accidents or emergencies.

However, Chen said that she has limited knowledge and understanding of IP protection. The good thing is that Artisans Angkor recognizes how IP will benefit creators, so the company applies for IP protection on behalf of its creations. Chen also noted that the company allows creative freedom in the creation process, which has given her the opportunity to create her own designs and masterpieces.

It's important to note that having knowledge and understanding of IP protection is crucial for creators and entrepreneurs in protecting their creations and ensuring their long-term success. In the competitive world of entrepreneurship, having a solid understanding of IP can make all the difference, and it's important that creators are provided with access to educate themselves on the subject.

Chen's journey as a successful artisan at Artisans Angkor serves as an inspiration to women everywhere. It's essential that more women follow in her footsteps by taking up entrepreneurial opportunities in Cambodia. By doing so, they can not only contribute to their household income, but also the country's economy, and help pave the way for future generations of women to thrive in their careers.

**"With the right knowledge and support, women in Cambodia can achieve anything they set their minds to and create a better future for themselves and their families."**

# Somchit Chaleunphonh

## Entrenched woman silk weaver uses a Geographical Indication to protect Lao century-old cultural heritage

A deep affection for silk weaving and a strong desire to preserve and inherit Lao silk led Somchit Chaleunphonh, now the president of the Luangprabang Silk GI Promotion Association, to learn about GI registration and make Luangprabang Silk well known internationally.



### The Journey from Silk Weaving to IP Champion

Somchit Chaleunphonh has worked over three decades in her family's silk business, which has been passed down from generation to generation. She has a wealth of knowledge in silk weaving, and her dedication for the craft is evident in the intricate and beautiful silk fabrics she creates, each one telling a unique story of the country's heritage and culture.

Her journey in IP began when the Department of Intellectual Property (DIP) of Lao PDR launched a training program to promote geographic indication (GI) among entrepreneurs in the silk industry and related fields. Somchit, like many others in the industry, was approached to attend these training sessions. The program offered comprehensive knowledge of GI, from the registration process to the necessary knowledge to successfully register and manage GI after the registration.

"At first, many silk entrepreneurs didn't fully grasp the concept of IP and GI," she said. "But after attending the training sessions organized by the DIP office, we were able to comprehend how GI could help protect and add value to our products."

With the knowledge gained from the two-year training program, entrepreneurs were able to apply for GI registration. However, registering for GI is not an easy feat. The silk needs to be produced using high-quality skills and techniques, and the process is more difficult compared to normal silk production, requiring a higher level of skill and expertise.

"GI standards make GI-registered silk more valuable and known for its special and unique quality in the market," she noted.

Overall, GI protection helps silk entrepreneurs to continue their legacy of producing high-quality silk products while also benefiting from the economic value and recognition associated with their geographical location.



## Promoting Quality and Collaboration: The Role of IP in the Thriving Silk Industry of Laos

To continue to promote the importance of GI and to maintain the quality of Luangprabang silk according to its specification, the Luangprabang Silk GI Promotion Association was established, with Somchit and entrepreneurs from different families coming together to share knowledge and resources.

“Any entrepreneur in the silk industry can apply to join the association, but in order to register their products for GI protection, they must meet the association's standards for quality and process. This ensures that all members of the association are committed to producing high-quality silk products that are protected under GI registration”, Somchit shared.

Somchit encourages silk entrepreneurs to join the association as it enables them to have the opportunity to upgrade their IP knowledge and weaving skills through internal meetings and training to ensure the quality of Luangprabang silk products. The ongoing education and collaboration ensure that the silk industry in Laos continues to thrive and promote sustainable development through entrepreneurship and IP protection.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a significant challenge for Somchit and the fellow members. The association did not receive much recognition or attention from the public, as people were preoccupied with the ongoing crisis. However, Somchit noted that in recent months, the association has started to gain more visibility and support. Their efforts are beginning to pay off.



“We notice the increased recognition for GI silk for its high quality and made from natural fabric,” she said. “Its selling price has increased, as has the demand for silk products. The artisans also receive higher wages for their work.”

The results reflect the added value and prestige associated with GI protection. Through this collaborative effort, more entrepreneurs are able to see the benefits of GI and work towards protecting their businesses. She believes that people are becoming more aware of the struggles and challenges faced by entrepreneurs in the silk industry, and are recognizing the importance of protecting traditional cultural heritage through IP rights.

The association has played an important role in setting standards for the silk industry in Laos. This includes establishing national standards for quality and process, which helps to ensure consistency and quality across different silk products. Additionally, Somchit is proud to note that there is no gender gap in the association for silk production. Both men and women produce the same high-quality silk, and there is an equal ratio of men and women in the production process.

**“Protect the culture, as it is the history and heritage of the country,” said Somchit to the next generation of entrepreneurs in the silk industry. “By working together, entrepreneurs and organizations can protect and promote traditional knowledge and our cultural heritage.”**

Her work in promoting the unique cultural heritage of Lao PDR through the development of silk products has not only created economic opportunities for local communities but has also raised awareness about the importance of IP protection and supported economic development and innovation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



**INSPIRING  
ASEAN  
WOMEN IN IP**

Category

**EDUCATORS**

# Prof. Madya Rohazar Wati bt. Zuallcobley



**From chance encounter to acclaimed IP educator, inspiring future generations through teaching IP**

Prof. Madya Rohazar Wati bt. Zuallcobley's journey in IP started by chance, without knowing that it would lead to the fulfilling career she now has as a professor in the Faculty of Law at the MARA University of Technology (UiTM) in Malaysia. Her dedication has inspired countless students and made her a well-respected figure in the field.

## Inspiring Journey in IP

Prof. Rohazar stumbled onto IP while studying law in the United Kingdom. She opted for IP as one chosen elective course, and it didn't take long for her to find the subject fascinating. She went on to get a Master of Laws (LLM) in Intellectual Property Law and upon her return to Malaysia and began lecturing on the subject in 1986.

At the time, there weren't many students interested in IP. She initially taught her students about registered and non-registered trademarks, patent, industrial design, confidential information and copyright law. However, Prof. Rohazar, who has been in IP education for over 30 years, claimed that many IT-focused college majors have become increasingly interested in IP in recent years.

"As technology and innovation continue to evolve, many universities have recognized the importance of IP protection and included it in their curriculum," she added. "IP is currently taught as an elective legal subject for third-year students, but there is a need to prioritize governance and support to ensure that students understand early on in their professional journey what IP rights are and how to protect them."

This positive step in IP education has not only enhanced the interest in IP among students but has also paved the way for a new generation of IP professionals.



## Raising Awareness of IP in SMEs in Malaysia

Ignoring IP protection can have serious and long-lasting consequences for business owners and innovators. Prof. Rohazar gave the example of a business-owning family that approached her concerned about the unauthorized use of a trade mark that had been in the family for 40 years. The family was forced to change their trade mark to avoid infringement and protect their brand.

This loss of their original trade mark not only cost the family a significant amount of time and money but also damaged the reputation and recognition of their original brand.

“To prevent such losses, innovators and business owners need to understand IP and seek assistance in protecting their IP,” she emphasized.

She also shared that the government has taken active steps to raise awareness of IP and its importance to businesses in Malaysia. One of these steps has been the establishment of the IP Academy by the Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia (MyIPO), which provides in-house training and awareness campaigns on IP as well as initiates collaborative efforts with corporations.

Ultimately, the Malaysian government's initiatives to raise IP awareness are meant to provide an environment in which entrepreneurs and inventors may grow by protecting and profiting from their own creations.



## Supporting IP Growth and Women in IP

“The field of IP has seen a significant increase in interest among female students in recent years.” Prof. Rohazar added, “Many students who go on to graduate in IP establish their own IP firms, and women are just as likely as men to do so.”

As more and more women pursue careers in IP, they are helping to support women creatives and innovators in Malaysia. By becoming IP practitioners, women are not only breaking down barriers and creating new opportunities for themselves but also paving the way for a more diverse and inclusive industry.

“Greater access to education and mentorship opportunities is one of the key factors in the growing number of women in IP,” she noted. As a result, women are able to receive the support and guidance they need to succeed in the field. The rise of women in leadership positions in the industry also serves as an inspiration for other women to pursue their own careers in IP.

The IP industry in Malaysia is poised for even greater innovation and success as the number of women working in this field continues to rise. By empowering women to take on leadership roles and pursue their passion for IP, Malaysia is not only creating new opportunities for its female workforce, but also positioning itself as a leader in the global IP landscape.

She advises students embarking on their IP journeys that **“studying IP is crucial for understanding how to protect the valuable creations and innovations of individuals and businesses in our increasingly competitive and innovation-driven world.”**



**INSPIRING  
ASEAN  
WOMEN IN IP**

Category

**COMMERCIALIZATION  
AND FINANCIAL  
ADVISORS**

# Mary Jade T. Roxas-Divinagracia, CFA<sup>®</sup>, CVA

## Trailblazing woman in IP helps SMEs achieve breakthrough success with IP valuation

Mary Jade T. Roxas-Divinagracia, a Managing Partner of Deals & Corporate Finance at Isla Lipana & Co./PwC Philippines, is one of the pioneers in raising IP awareness in the Philippines. Her expertise and efforts have helped numerous SMEs realize the potential of IP as a powerful tool for driving their success.



### The journey in supporting and commercializing IP

As an accountant, Jade's first foray into IP was in 2005. At that time, accounting standards required companies doing business combinations to allocate the purchase price among various assets acquired, whether tangible and intangible, and liabilities assumed from the transaction. Companies needed guidance in identifying the intangible assets they were purchasing and how they drove the valuation of companies.

Jade's expertise and training in financial reporting valuation, helped bridge this knowledge gap and raise awareness on the importance of IP in business.

In addition to her work as Managing Partner at PwC Philippines, Jade has also supported the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOP), regularly collaborating with the organization in promoting the value of IP in the country. Over the last ten years, she has conducted training and lectures, sharing her knowledge and experience in valuing IP assets.

## Promoting IP awareness and education for SMEs in the Philippines



“There is still much work to be done to promote the awareness and appreciation of intellectual property, particularly among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and individual IP owners,” Jade said. “While larger corporations typically have a strong focus on brand and technology, SMEs may not fully understand the potential value of their own IP.”

Jade emphasized the importance of early exposure to IP management, valuation, and appreciation for entrepreneurs and students.

“By educating them on the basics of IP, entrepreneurs can better understand how to monetize their own IP and create a more sustainable business.” She went on to say, “For the students, the earlier they are exposed to IP development, the better it is for them to become innovative entrepreneurs after their studies.”

Jade suggested that subsidies for IP valuation can help promote greater awareness and implementation of IP practices. The government and industry leaders can play a critical role in promoting IP by providing tax incentives for IP creation and commercialization as well as increased support for IP registration and enforcement. Jade also mentioned that in other ASEAN countries, the government underwrites up to 50% of bank financing provided with IP as collateral. Under this arrangement, the government provides support to innovative startups by sharing the risks taken by private financial institutions.

She further shares, “By continuing to raise IP awareness and educate stakeholders at all levels, we can help create a more robust and innovative business environment that benefits all.”





## Breaking women's barriers in IP

The Philippines ranks high in gender equality. In 2021, the country ranked second in leading women's participation in IP with 38% of all Patent Cooperation Treaty applications filed by women.<sup>7</sup> However, Jade believes that there is still much to be done in terms of advancing women in IP and promoting the growth of IP practices in general.

She now plays an active role in promoting better practices in IP valuation in the Philippines and the region. She has been engaged in various initiatives and organizations that focus on supporting IP, talking about IP valuation and commercialization.

"Mentorship and networking are key factors in supporting women in IP". She notes that women would benefit from having more female role models and mentors who can guide and inspire them, as well as opportunities to connect with other women in the industry.

She also advocates for women who are interested in IP to learn more than just the basics of IP protection and instead delve into the intricacies of IP management. This includes not just valuing IP, but also understanding how it can create business value over time. This will help women feel more confident in their ability to navigate the world of IP and utilize it to their advantage.

While progress has been made in recent years, there is a need for a support system that will specifically enable women to raise funds with their ideas and thrive in male-dominated industries. She believes that closing the gender gap in IP requires a shift in the mindset and culture of the whole industry. Members of the industry should recognize the value women bring to the table and implement a more inclusive approach to innovation and entrepreneurship.

"Let us remember that equal opportunity for growth in the future is within reach," she said, "Women in IP should not be discouraged by the challenges they may face, but rather look for possible partnerships and support systems to help them along the way."

Jade encourages women to learn from the stories of other women who have gone through the process and to empower others to do the same. With a stronger community and support system, more women can break through the glass ceiling and make their mark in the world of IP. "Let us continue to support and uplift one another in our pursuit of success in IP," she adds.

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<sup>7</sup> WIPO IP Statistics Data Center, Share of women inventors (yearly statistics), WIPO IP Statistics Data Center

# **STRENGTHENING**

# **WOMEN'S ROLE IN IP:**

# **CALL TO ACTION**

The pages of this e-magazine are brimming with inspiring stories of women who have faced and conquered numerous obstacles on their path to success. You learned how they skillfully used the IP system to build their own businesses, created policies that promote female empowerment in the workplace, and became beacons of hope for the next generation of women in IP.

These powerful accounts demonstrate the unlimited potential that women have to maximize the benefits of IP protection and enforcement, inspiring us all to push forward and continue to bridge the gender gap in the field.

There is still much to be done in terms of advancing women in IP and promoting the awareness and growth of IP in general. Nevertheless, throughout these inspiring stories, we realize that there are possible bridges available to overcome this gap. These include, among others:

## **To increase awareness-raising on women and IPR among stakeholders in the national and regional context to ensure the necessity of female contribution.**

All the stories in this e-magazine affirm the fact that closing the gender gap requires a shift in mindset and ideology towards gender-related issues. It is crucial for the society to recognize the value women bring to the table and implement a more inclusive approach to innovation and entrepreneurship.

The inspiring stories of Chen Mom, Nichada Suriyacharearn or Tran Thi Thanh Yen have challenged stereotypes and demonstrate that women can be equally successful in traditionally male-dominated fields. Gender should never be a barrier to success. These female artisans, silk weavers and workers in these community-based industries have achieved great success through hard work, determination and a strong will in their abilities.

Throughout these stories, we also realize that increasing awareness-raising on IP among stakeholders is of great importance. Many of these women started with little knowledge of IP. With the support of IP Offices through seminars and training, they realized the importance of IP registration, and have successfully exploited IP to maximize the value of their products. Nichada Suriyacharearn's story is a prime example. With knowledge about the potential benefits of GI, she turned it into a formidable shield to safeguard the long-history Lamphun Brocade Thai Silk and support local weavers. This is also the story of Arlin Chondro, a natural health products entrepreneur who harnesses IP protection for her business expansion.

Governments should take active steps to promote awareness among stakeholders about the associated benefits of IPR protection. In addition, government must be informed of the necessity of female contribution to economic development and how IPR can act as an enabler and facilitator of such development.

**To promote gender balance in decision-making bodies on intellectual property, government and business stakeholders to ensure that policies are created to promote a workplace and industries where women can thrive.**

All the stories in the publication have shown that it is crucial to promote workplaces and industries where women can thrive. We can see that even in countries where women are well-represented in certain industries, challenges still exist for women to build sustainable careers and balance multiple responsibilities. Providing resources and support, such as flexible work arrangements, supportive and inclusive workplace culture, can help women overcome these obstacles.

Gender balance in decision-making bodies is also crucial. Data reviewed that only 20% of ASEAN parliament members are women, with an average of just 24% of senior and middle managers in business being women.<sup>8</sup> Promoting female policymakers can create policies that benefit women and encourage greater gender balance. The stories of Norazizah Jaafar, Dr. Moe Moe Thwe and Winnie Tham underscore the importance of having women in policy-making positions, as they have been instrumental in developing and contributing to policies that unlock opportunities for women in IP and innovation.

**To increase the availability of mentors and supporting programs to enable women to succeed in their field and maximize the benefits of IP protection.**

Mentorship and networking could be a key factor in helping to overcome the prejudices and misconceptions concerning women and their role in society, limiting them to traditional roles rather than leaders in commerce, business, science, technology, and the arts. Women can benefit from having more female role models and mentors who can guide and inspire them, as well as opportunities to connect with other women in their industry.

The women featured in the publication are great inspirations for others to look up to. And they all are paying it forward by empowering more women to achieve success and exploit the benefits of IP protection. We have Nichada Suriyacharearn, a champion for women entrepreneurs in Thailand, empowering them to take ownership of their craft. We have Mary Jade T. Roxas-Divinagracia, who has been engaged in various initiatives and organizations that promote IP and support IP valuation.

Women can also benefit from participating in women's IP events, joining chat groups, participating in women support programs offered by various organizations. Joining these communities and programs will provide them with valuable knowledge, resources, and opportunities to gain insights and advice from others in the same industry, and further succeed in the fields.

Lastly, remember that the use of IP is available to everyone, regardless of how they embark on their IP journey. It could be by chance, just like how Prof. Madya Rohazar Wati bt. Zuallocobley began hers, or by independent learning, like how Tran Thi Thanh Yen discovered the potential of IP. Some people may be driven by the need to protect cultural heritage, as in the case of Somchit Chaleunphonh and Nichada Suriyacharearn. Nonetheless, regardless of the starting point, everyone has the same opportunity to utilize IP.

**By actively engaging in the IP system, we can protect our ideas and creations while promoting innovation and creativity. We must continue to work towards bridging the gender gap in IP and empowering more women to take on significant roles in the field. Let us all be inspired by the stories shared in this publication and work towards a more inclusive and equitable future in IP.**

<sup>8</sup> The-ASEAN-April-May-2021-Issue.pdf <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/The-ASEAN-April-May-2021-Issue.pdf>

# ABOUT ARISE+ IPR



This publication has been elaborated under the ARISE+ IPR project, financed by the European Union and implemented by the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO). This activity is the result of the project's commitment to bridge the gender equality in the ASEAN Region, and more specifically within the field of Intellectual Property.

The ARISE Plus Intellectual Property Rights (ARISE+ IPR) programme is one of the components under the Enhanced ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the European Union (EU), or ARISE Plus.

ARISE+ IPR supports regional integration through intellectual property (IP) cooperation and aims to upgrade the IP systems for creation, protection, utilisation, administration and enforcement, in line with international best practices and standards and the strategic objectives of the ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2016-2025.

## **ARISE+ IPR aims to:**

- Enhance participation of ASEAN Member States in international IP treaties and global systems
- Contribute to institutional capacity building towards more efficient ASEAN IP offices
- Increase political and public awareness of the importance of IP protection and enforcement
- Reinforce the capacity of ASEAN businesses to commercialise and protect their IP rights
- Provide tailor-made support to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar

Working closely with the ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN Secretariat, the ARISE+ IPR project further consolidates the benefits of strong IP protections in the region. A series of capacity building initiatives, development of information tools, exchange of best practices, adoption of international standards, and awareness-raising campaigns are conducted to promote the use, protection and enforcement of IP rights. The target of these activities and initiatives are the ASEAN IP administrations, enforcement agencies, local and international businesses, as well as the general public.

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