

EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

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On 19 September 1893, Governor Lord Glasgow signed the Electoral Act making New Zealand the first country in the world to give women the right to vote in parliamentary elections, following the first state to do so, California.



“Then, we’ve had three women leaders. Like my boss, the Prime Minister of New Zealand who is about the same age as Mayor Joy (Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte). She is very dynamic and committed to gender equality and also the LGBT rights,” His Excellency David Strachan, ambassador of New Zealand to the Philippines, said during the launch of Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs Bootcamp (AWEB) at the Quezon City Hall last week.

AWEB is a multi-year program that focuses on developing the basic competencies needed by aspiring women entrepreneurs. In the seminars conducted, participants are lectured about ideas, plans and key principles in running a business from the ground.

“It makes a lot of sense therefore to see what we can do to help women entrepreneurs especially those who come from low-income backgrounds. I’m really delighted that progress is being made at the AWEB bootcamp,” Strachan added. Chosen participants of the bootcamp came from the barangays of Alicia, Ramon Magsaysay, Vasra, Pag-Asa and East Fairview. Each will be given seed funding by the New Zealand embassy and Spark Philippines to help jumpstart their business. “This is the second year that we’ve been closely working with Spark which I have a very high regard for. This is the first time we’ve collaborated with Quezon City, too.

This is something that we're very keen to support," he said.

The bootcamp will run from September 2019 to December 2021 with three target areas of implementation. Strachan added, "We've got the bootcamp coming in November in Iloilo and Cagayan de Oro for the next 18 months."

Quezon City recognizes the role of women entrepreneurs in the socio-economic development of the city. Just this year, an entrepreneurship ordinance was passed to support the growth of Quezon City women. Under the ordinance, a women's business development council was created to organize livelihood programs, projects, trainings and seminars to encourage and empower aspiring entrepreneurs to venture into their own businesses.

"We also launched the shared services facility in Greater Lagro which provides facilities and equipment needed for their product development. This also provides training on technical assistance needed by the women entrepreneurs. These are just some of the many projects we are doing for our aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs of micro, small and medium enterprises," Mayor Belmonte shared. AWEB marks the second partnership of New Zealand and Spark Philippines. The bootcamp is one of the NGO's many initiatives in collaborating with the local government to provide assistance to former OFWs, detainees, members of the LGBTQ+ community and now, to women entrepreneurs.

"You saw the expressions of the 10 women who are participating in this bootcamp. It might seem modest to other people, but for them this is a big deal. Anything that we can do to help realize the potential of these women is important for us. It might be a small drop in the bucket, but for the people concerned, they really appreciate it. Creating success stories can be an inspiration to other low-income women in the city. I'm really optimistic that these small projects in the long term will make quite a significant impact," the ambassador concluded.