



## SNAPSHOT

### Web Platform Enabling and Connecting Social Enterprises in Cambodia



Alberto Cremonesi, Impact Hub co-founder, in their space in BKK1.

[Photo Credit: Development Innovations]

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“Social enterprises are not new to Cambodia,” remarks Alberto Cremonesi, co-founder of [Impact Hub’s Phnom Penh branch](#) (IHPP). “Networks are not new either,” he adds. But acknowledging the lack of a “one stop solution,” Impact Hub’s new platform, [Social Enterprise Cambodia](#) (SEC) aims to bring it all together: social enterprises, social innovators, funders, investors, research institutes and universities all in a single directory that also showcases the amazing innovations that Cambodia has to offer. The platform also offers the practical resources, information about social entrepreneurship and learning opportunities that novices and NGOs who are transitioning into the social enterprise model can take advantage of. As of August 2016, registered enterprises have secured more than \$100,000 in investments.

Impact Hub is a global network of more than 73 co-working spaces, innovation and incubation labs, which are globally connected by being locally rooted. “This is where the beauty of the network comes out,” describes Alberto. Working with many universities, Alberto and his team observed the trend of young people wanting to run their own businesses, and also have an impact on social and environmental problems.

The SEC platform serves these groups as a comprehensive resource for social enterprises, building on the lessons learned from Impact Hub Phnom Penh’s pre-existing activities. Alberto estimates that there are an estimated 200 social enterprises which already exist in Cambodia, many of whom are registered NGOs and part of the larger civil society community. Furthermore, as Cambodia’s economy improves and traditional donors of development aid reduce their support to the country, many organizations are transitioning to a social enterprise model. However, little trusted data and examples exist for solution-oriented social organizations, especially with details about how they work and where they work. Before SEC, Cambodia lacked a network of social enterprises despite the growing interest both locally and globally.

In mid-2015, IHPP published a study that found that social enterprise investors wanted a central information resource, with a dynamic and issue-focused directory of potential investment opportunities. From there, IHPP received a grant from [Development Innovations](#) and began to formalize the pre-existing social enterprise network they had created. Social Enterprise Cambodia aims to help new Cambodian social enterprises to leverage existing regional and global investment platforms and the IHPP objectives to inspire, enable and connect. With a Khmer language platform, the new directory lowers barriers to entry and seeks to help connect users with lower levels of English to potential investors outside of Cambodia. The website also offers information on the academic aspects of social entrepreneurship, learning opportunities, and many cases studies of successes.

There has already been an increase in the number of members who have signed up since the platform launched, and Alberto attributes this to the more user friendly and accessible SEC platform. Alberto is confident they can help more enterprises connect to investors, and investment dollars will continue to flow as they grow the number of enterprises registered.

As Impact Hub grows its services, Impact Hub Phnom Penh is also working with Development Innovations to start up the [EPIC Incubator](#) – the Entrepreneurship Program ICT for Change, a coaching program focusing on business and technology support to young entrepreneurs interested in tech solutions to solve social problems. It launched officially in August 2016.