

MasterCard Empowers Cambodian Women to Make a Livelihood

Sponsors Ten Women for the Hotel de la Paix Sewing Training Centre Program

Singapore, 18 June 2009: More women in Cambodia now have a chance to earn a decent living to support themselves and their families. Ten women will be sponsored by MasterCard for the Hotel de la Paix Sewing Training Centre Program, a ten-month-long program teaching women sewing skills and offering basic education on setting up a business. As part of MasterCard's commitment to consumer education, the program will also include basic financial literacy to help the women learn to manage their finances.

The Hotel de la Paix Sewing Training Centre is a vocational facility run by Hotel de la Paix in Siem Reap, Cambodia, that provides skills and training to young disadvantaged Khmer women. Besides sewing, students also learn English, and are each given a sewing machine and start-up kit of materials upon graduation so that they can return to their villages and start their own businesses.

The students of the program are young, disadvantaged Khmer women between the ages of 16 and 22. Many of them come from outside of Siem Reap, where opportunities to receive training or employment are lacking. These uneducated and unskilled women usually find work on local construction sites, earning around USD1 per day for 16 hours of labor. The initiative seeks to provide them with the skills to make a living, so that they are not subjected to working in environments which are unsafe and unsuitable.

Georgette Tan, vice president, Communications, Asia/Pacific, Middle East & Africa, MasterCard Worldwide, said, "Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in the world with more than 30 percent of the population still living in extreme poverty. In addition, women are disadvantaged as they do not enjoy equal access to education and paid employment. We commend the efforts of Hotel de la Paix in helping these women and are glad to be contributing to this initiative. This initiative is part of our broader commitment to women's advancement and we look forward to seeing these women stand on their own feet to support themselves and their families."

The Hotel de la Paix Sewing Training Centre is part of the hotel's 'Community Connections' program, which seeks to foster cross-cultural understanding and sensitivity through tourism. The program encourages guests to interact with and

contribute to the local community, and comprises a host of initiatives which provide local communities with basic necessities and a livelihood.

This is the second initiative which MasterCard is working with Hotel de la Paix on, the first being its 'Pushbike' initiative. The 'Pushbike' initiative is aimed at helping needy children from outlying villages reach school with ease by providing them with bicycles. MasterCard donated a bicycle for every room paid for with a MasterCard card for the period of September to December 2008, contributing close to 400 bikes.

Other initiatives which MasterCard has pioneered in its commitment to empower women and promote their socio-economic standing in the society include the MasterCard-U21 Global sponsorship program and *Go Red For Women presented by MasterCard*.

The MasterCard-U21Global scholarship program was launched in 2006 to empower women executives through education to realize their full potential. It comprises 20 annual scholarships for the U21Global Postgraduate Diploma of Business Administration. The *Go Red For Women presented by MasterCard* involved ten designers from across South East Asia creating ten red dresses that were auctioned with proceeds being donated to the Singapore Heart Foundation. MasterCard has also supported the Payatas women project in the Philippines through the Rags2Riches social entrepreneurship program, which aims to give the women at the Payatas dumpsite in the Philippines a chance to get their wares sold directly in the market, enabling them to make a fair profit.

About MasterCard

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