Women’s Business Resource Center in Papua New Guinea Marks Its Second Anniversary, Thanks to Support from Australian and U.S. Governments

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WASHINGTON (PRWEB) January 03, 2019 -- The Women’s Business Resource Center (WBRC) in Papua New Guinea is celebrating two years of ground-breaking work in a country where women face many daunting obstacles to economic empowerment.

The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) opened the WBRC in Port Moresby in late 2016, with support from the Australian Government in partnership with the Government of Papua New Guinea and the U.S. Department of State. The WBRC is a walk-in center that provides a safe setting for women to meet mentors and receive training or resources that can help them launch and run profitable businesses.

More than one thousand local women have utilized WBRC services and many shared their stories at a recent event to celebrate the center’s success. Andrew Egan, Minister Counsellor, Development from the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby, was among those at the event who stressed the importance of investing in programs that help women and girls in PNG realize their full potential.

“The Australian Government is proud to support such an innovative enterprise. By supporting (it), we would like to see women participate and help them become leaders in their community and the country,” Mr. Egan said. “The PNG Women’s Business Resource Center, over the past two years, has gained a reputation as the resource hub where women in our community can learn to grow their business from the ground up, to gain personnel and professional confidence, and to be mentored by other women business owners, entrepreneurs, and academics.”

The need for the WBRC is particularly great in Papua New Guinea, ranked 159 of 160 countries in the latest United Nations Development Programme gender inequality index, ahead of only Yemen. About two-thirds of PNG women are victims of gender-based violence, according to reports, and far fewer women than men hold formal jobs in the workforce. The WBRC has round-the-clock security and most services are offered free of charge. In addition, childcare services are offered so that women with children are not excluded from benefiting from the WBRC’s services.

“Increased economic opportunities flow into possible increased financial independence and awareness, which help women gain confidence and be better positioned to assume leadership roles in their families, communities, and businesses,” Eli Webb, CIPE Country Director for PNG said. “Stronger women build stronger families, and stronger families build a stronger Papua New Guinea.”

The WBRC is gaining worldwide attention and may serve as a model for similar initiatives in emerging economies and developing countries. The WBRC was highlighted recently during global events, including APEC’s Women and the Economy Forum in September and the Civil Society Policy Forum conducted during World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund Annual Meetings in October.

The WBRC will launch a website with additional resources and information in early 2019. In the meantime, visit www.facebook.com/pngwbrc to learn more about center offerings and the women in business receiving
CIPE implemented the cutting-edge program through ongoing partnerships with the U.S. State Department’s Office of Global Women’s Issues and the Australian Government’s Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development program, which aims to improve the political, economic and social opportunities for women in 14 Pacific Island countries. CIPE is an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and is a core institute of the National Endowment for Democracy.
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