

## Mekong Vitality Expanded Alliance



Women in Vinh Long look at a smartphone installed with business training materials.

Photo: Pact

**GVN Counterparts**  
Vinh Long People's Committee

**Duration**  
July 2014 – December 2016

**Budget:**  
\$400,000

**Prime Implementer:**  
Pact

**For more information:**

**USAID**  
Hanoi, Vietnam  
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<http://vietnam.usaid.gov>

The Mekong Vitality Expanded (MVE) Alliance is a two-year, microfinance project aimed at assisting economically disadvantaged women in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. USAID's participation builds on an existing partnership of The Coca-Cola Foundation and Pact that alleviates poverty through WORTH, an award-winning savings-led microfinance program that gathers women into empowerment groups to save, loan funds, and develop small businesses. The expanded partnership includes the addition of mobile technology solutions and deeper business skills training for many of the women participating in WORTH.

### **DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

The Alliance focuses on transforming women from microenterprise operators to entrepreneurs and business leaders by equipping them with an understanding of sound business practices and market forces, including trade-related opportunities.

### **INTRODUCING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY**

Since women entrepreneurs are less likely to have access to physical networks and connective technologies such as the internet or cellular data networks, the project pairs business training with smart phone technology to provide access to training reinforcements and basic business information, while supporting social networks with additional communication tools.

### **EMPOWERING WOMEN TO ADVOCATE FOR THEIR NEEDS**

Women's empowerment groups are an important opportunity for socialization and networking, as women are less likely than men to effectively access social networks vital for business growth. The Alliance builds critical networks for participants by linking like-minded women in settings designed to foster sharing, innovation and support through in-person meetings, mentoring and training, including the use of mobile technology for communications.

### **YEAR ONE RESULTS**

- **More Access to Capital:** Over \$400,000 in loans were accessed from WORTH groups to start or expand businesses
- **Deeper Business Skills Development and Financial Literacy:** Over 4,000 women were trained on record keeping and filling, safe money handling, saving and loaning; 100 participated in a series of advanced trainings to develop business plans
- **Use of Technology to Support Skills Development:** 100 women were trained on mobile phone use to access advanced business training curriculum and mobile learning; 87 of which also attended networking and gender mainstreaming workshops