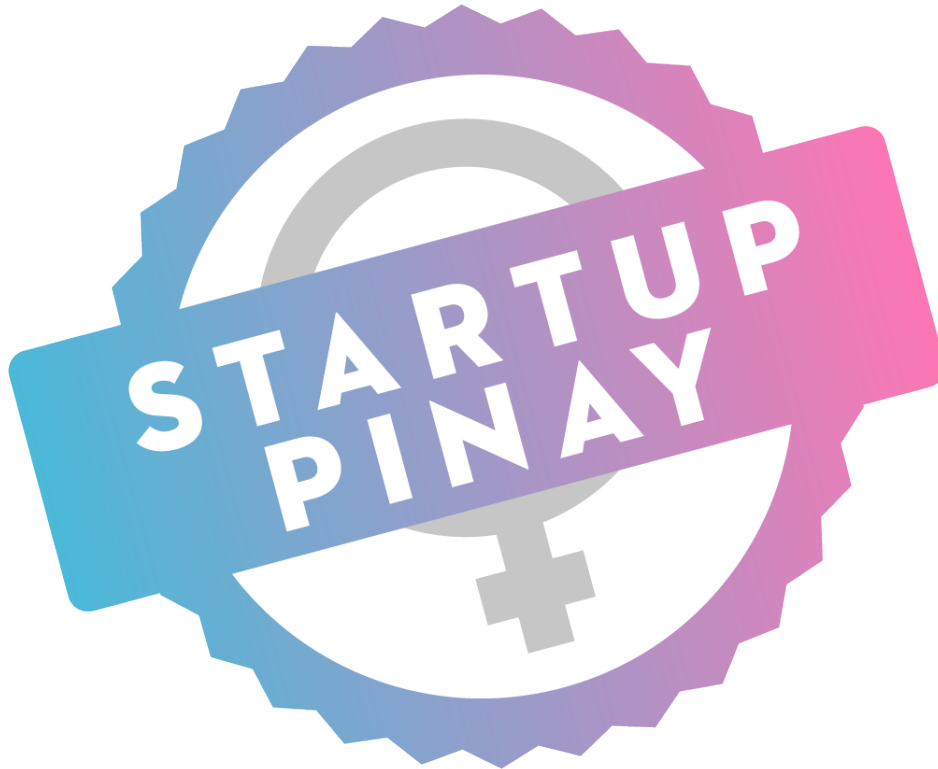


**QBO Innovation Hub Partners With Investing In Women To Champion
#PinayTechSheroes Through Their Startup Pinay Program**



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September 25, 2020, Manila, Philippines—While the Philippines ranks as the sixteenth most gender-equal nation in the world, according to a 2020 Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum, there still are gaps in the male-dominated field that is the tech industry. A 2020 Philippine Startup Survey by PwC found that while 80% of startup founders who responded were male, only 20% were female.

Through its *Startup Pinay* program, which aims to foster a community of female-led tech startups through funding, mentorship, and exposure, **QBO Innovation Hub ('QBO')** has been actively promoting opportunities for women to lead in the startup community. To help take this program a step further, QBO is excited to announce an exciting partnership with Investing in Women, an initiative of the Australian Government that promotes women's economic empowerment in South East Asia.

"At QBO, *QLLABORATION* as we like to call it, is at the core of what we do. Through our partnership with Investing in Women, we're happy to share our plans to expand our Startup Pinay program and continue to grow our support for our country's female founders," said QBO Director **Katrina Rausa Chan**. "We envision that this partnership will advance our goals to increase both leadership and participation in the highly lucrative tech startup sector among Filipinas, by directly tackling gender norms and pervasive

attitudes in the industry that have historically held women back from achieving their full potential,” Chan added.

The three-year partnership with Investing in Women will significantly expand QBO’s Startup Pinay program. It will enable QBO to take meaningful steps towards shifting gender norms, especially as it concerns the role of women as founders, workplace gender equality, and access to growth capital for women-owned and women-led enterprises in the Philippines.

“IW is excited to be working in partnership with QBO, as they work to shift gender norms to fully enable women’s meaningful participation in the tech startup space in the Philippines. Women are innovative, talented and ambitious to succeed as startup founders, but are often limited by traditional expectations of the roles they play at home, at work and in society,” said IW CEO Julia Newton-Howes. “We are also encouraged to see men in the QBO community acting as allies of women in the tech startup space,” she added.

To celebrate the launch, **Startup Pinay Brunch: Women Taking the Lead** was held virtually last September 25, 2020. Among the featured guests were female startup founders as well as leaders in the tech industry, who were treated to a brunch delivered to their homes.

While enjoying their meal, guests were directed to tune in to a live program that included a panel discussion among prominent women leaders. Panelists included Cathy Yap-Yang, Head of Corporate Communications of PLDT, and Minette Navarrete, President of Kickstart Ventures, moderated by Victoria Herrera, Head of Marketing at Kumu and Co-Founder of She Talks Asia. Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat of the Department of Tourism, delivered a message via video in support of the event.

Pinay founders who joined the brunch also participated in guided group discussion sessions, which allowed for more in-depth conversations on topics such as the challenges female founders are facing in the industry and the types of role models startup founders look up to.

To cap off the session, QBO shared upcoming initiatives of Startup Pinay, which have been updated to provide further support for founders. The programs, which fall under three core actions—*Exposure, Network, and Capacity Building*—include sponsored participation in local and international conferences as well as the media, community meetups, and mentorship.

“We at QBO are incredibly excited about the opportunity to build a platform that helps our Pinay-led businesses to scale up and expand to new markets both here and beyond local borders. *Pinays* have had an indelible impact on social and economic spheres, and through our campaigns, we hope to inspire and continue to support the next generation of female leaders. *Startup Pinay*, as well as the innovations our women founders are creating, will undoubtedly have a huge impact on our country, and our future,” said Chan.

Clearly, this is just the beginning for female founders in the Philippines.

To learn more about Startup Pinay, head over to QBO's website at qbo.com.ph or follow them on their social media accounts at @QBOPhilippines. If you're a tech founder yourself and want to be part of the Startup Pinay community, sign up through this link: <http://bit.ly/StartupPinay>.

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About QBO Innovation Hub

QBO ('ku-bo') is an innovation hub or a platform for the startup community to collaborate, develop talents, and grow. They provide startups with support and resources through events and capacity building programs as well as focused interventions designed to improve access to markets, knowledge, capital and talent. Created in 2016 through a partnership among IdeaSpace, J.P. Morgan, DOST, and DTI, QBO has been an active player in creating a competitive ecosystem in the Philippines, fueled by their vision of Filipino startups changing the world.

About Investing in Women

Investing in Women, an initiative of the Australian Government, catalyses inclusive economic growth through women's economic empowerment in South East Asia. Investing in Women uses innovative approaches to improve women's economic participation as employees and as entrepreneurs in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Myanmar through their programs: Workplace Gender Equality, Impact Investment for Women's SMEs, and Influencing Gender Norms.