



WOMEN'S
ENTREPRENEURSHIP



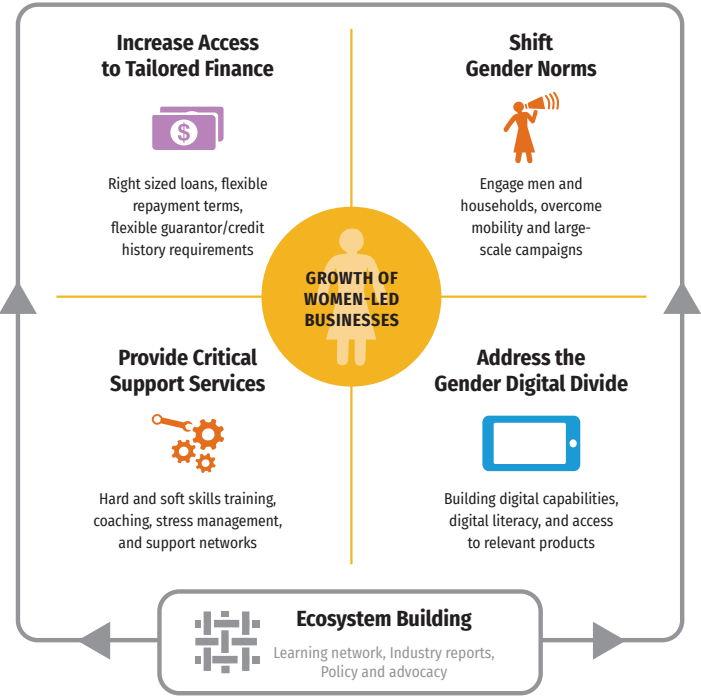
GROWING MICRO AND SMALL BUSINESSES

THE IGNITE PROGRAM: GLOBAL RESULTS 2022

CARE Women's Entrepreneurship

CARE operates in 104 countries and has a long history of focusing on women and girls. Women's Entrepreneurship (WE) at CARE aims to improve the financial security and decision-making for over **3 million entrepreneurs** and employees, primarily women-led businesses, reach **30 million people**, and mobilize more than **\$500m USD** in private capital.




Growing Women-Led Micro and Small Businesses: A Holistic Package of Services



The Ignite Program: Pakistan, Peru, and Vietnam

The Ignite program, supported by the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, delivers access to tailored finance, a suite of critical support services, and outreach campaigns. Ignite has been implemented in Pakistan, Peru, and Vietnam since January of 2020. See below for a snapshot of our market contexts.

Click the *Numbers* in the table for *More Info*

		Financial Literacy Rate	Smartphone Ownership	Internet Penetration	Adults with an Account	Gender Gap Score
	Pakistan	26%	women: 20% men: 37%	36.5%	21%	.564
	Peru	57.6%	women: 61.6% men: 66.2%	65.3%	57%	.749
	Vietnam	97.75%	women: 63% men: 63%	73.2%	30.8%	.705

Data points are for both men and women, unless specified.

Impact Study Overview

CARE's Women's Entrepreneurship programming aims to reduce barriers that women entrepreneurs face by offering a combination of services – both financial and non-financial – that are essential to creating sustainable growth for women entrepreneurs.

As a part of the Ignite Program, CARE partnered with 60 Decibels to perform a specialized lean impact study across Pakistan, Peru, and Vietnam to measure core business themes and capture the impact of the Ignite program, supported by the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth.

Methodology



Survey mode:
Mobile phone



Countries:
Vietnam, Pakistan, Peru



Dates:
July-October 2022



Sampling method:
random sample from database of 18,814 program participants (68% female, 32% male)



Response rate:
53%



Average interview time:
28 minutes



Responses collected:
928

Accuracy

Confidence level: ~90%
Margin of error: ~5%

This study has potential limitations. The perception survey included 45 questions and was conducted over the phone.

Performance Snapshot



68%

Female Customers



51%

Accessing loans for the first time



49%

with no easy access to good loan alternatives



90%

improved quality of life



86%

Increased ability to manage finances



58%

Find it easy to raise emergency funds



79%

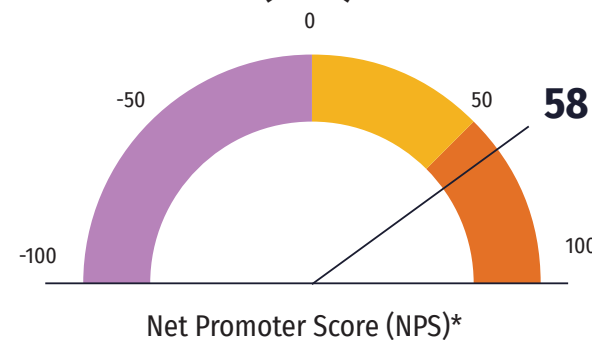
Say CARE contributed to business goals



81%

Increased sales

Net Promoter Score (NPS)*



Customer Effort Score (CES)*

4.34/5

*NPS is a gauge of client loyalty and a score of over 50 is considered excellent.

**CES is the ease of which customer issues are handled and is an important driver of uptake, adoption, and referrals, as well as of impact.

Performance Comparison









Over the course of three years, we have worked in three markets to deliver the Women’s Entrepreneurship model. The Covid-19 pandemic disproportionately affected women-owned enterprises. The metrics in this study are core measures of success.

- All three countries are offering products and services that improve quality of life
- Scores for financial management, resilience, achieving business goals, and sales increase are comparable across countries
- Of the three markets, Vietnam is doing the best in terms of female inclusivity

Read client stories here: [Dreaming big in Vietnam](#), [Achieving goals and paying it forward in Pakistan](#), and [Diversifying to save a business in Peru](#)

“I am a single parent and have to deal with everything by myself. This loan helped me to start my own work at home and earn for my family.”

—Female, 36 (Pakistan)

METRIC		VIETNAM	PAKISTAN	PERU	CARE Average
	Female Inclusivity % female customers	95	24	86	68
	First Access % accessing loans for the first time	33	60	53	51
	Access to Alternatives* % with no easy access to good loan alternatives	29	55	58	49
	Quality of Life % improved quality of life	90	90	89	90
	Financial Management % increased ability to manage finances	80	90	89	86
	Financial Resilience % find it easy to raise emergency funds	56	68	46	58
	Achieving Business Goals % say CARE contributed to achieving goals	83	78	73	79
	Sales % increased sales	80	90	72	81

* Only asked to clients accessing loans

 Indicates highest performance at country level for each metric

Data by 60_decibels

Impact Quality of Life and Emotional Wellbeing

Clients were asked whether their quality of life, stress level and confidence has changed because of CARE's programming.

90%
of clients report
improved quality of life

Top 3 reasons:

1. Higher sales/revenue
2. Business growth/expansion
3. Increased knowledge/skills

"My sales have improved. Now I have more control over my business and more organization. I know how to identify what I'm missing and I have new goals."

Female, 64 (Peru)

Over 4 in 5
clients report
improved stress levels

82% report improved stress levels (48% slightly improved, 34% very much improved)

"The course has helped me to trade more smoothly and communicate with customers better. My life has also been less stressful."

Female, 43 (Vietnam)

Nearly 9 in 10
clients report
increased confidence in
running their business

"I became more independent to make my own decisions and empowered to choose what is best for me. I am now able to think broadly regarding entrepreneurship and my confidence level is increased due to training."

Female, 22 (Pakistan)



Impact Financial Status and Business Performance

Clients were asked whether CARE's program contributed to a change in their ability to manage finances, achieve business goals, increase employee numbers and increase sales.

"I learned from the [financial training] app to separate the finances of the company and the house. Now I pay myself a salary."

Female (Peru)

86%
of clients report
increased
ability to
manage finances

81%
report **increase**
in sales (15%
sales increase
on average)

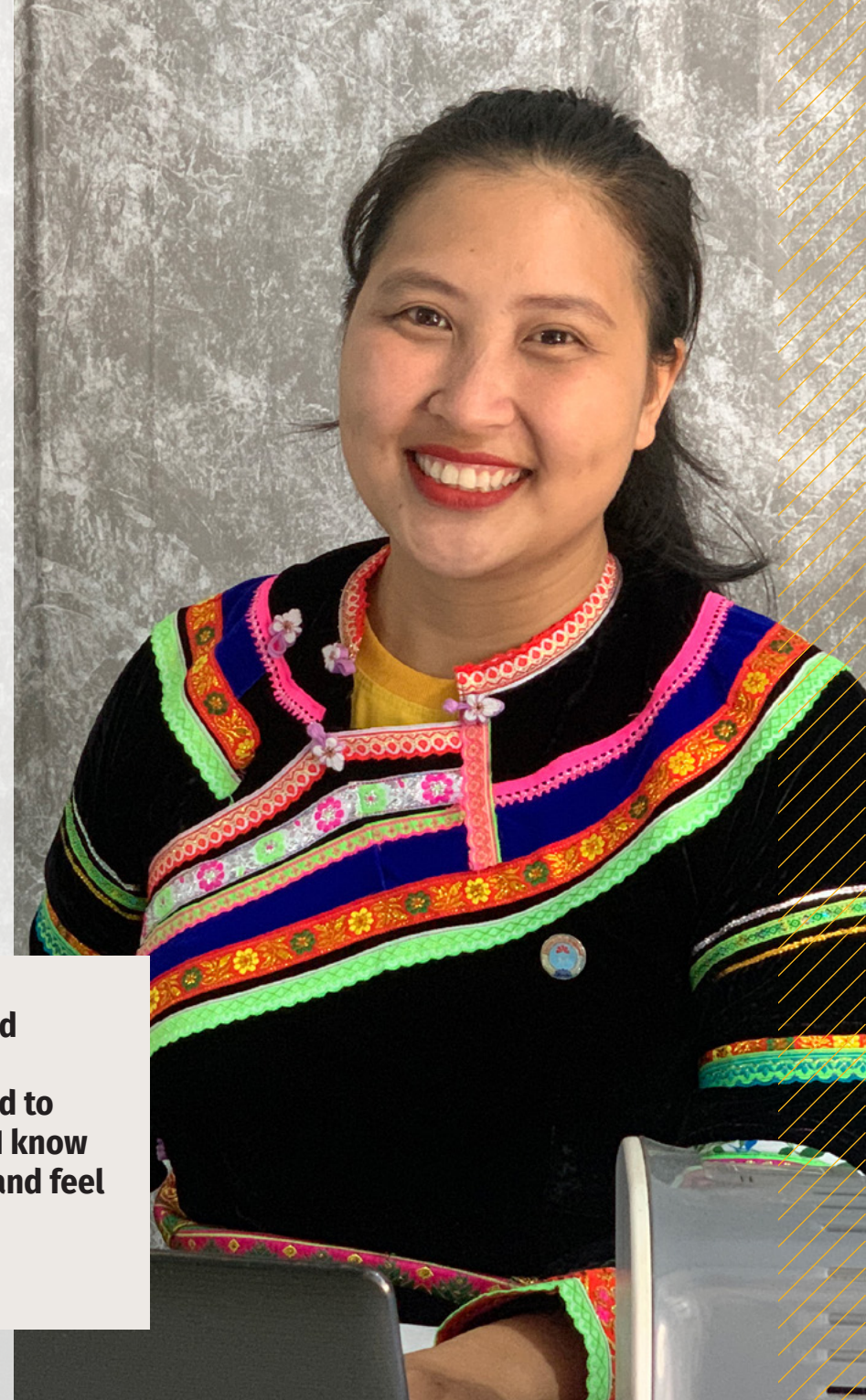
79%
have
achieved
business goals

58%
say it would be
easy to **raise**
emergency funds

26%
experienced an
increase
in employees

"The course introduced me to many business concepts I felt I needed to learn. Thanks to that, I know more about business and feel more confident."

- Female, 36 (Vietnam)



Impact Digital Usage

Clients were asked about digital usage and its impact on their business.

84%
of clients say CARE
has contributed
to their **business'**
use of digital tools
& services

“Before this I would be stranded in loans [to customers] for months and I was unable to receive money in time. But now I ensure I receive the money through these [microfinance] apps first and then I deliver them the final product. So now things are very easy for me.”

- Female, 52 (Pakistan)

79%
agree working
with CARE and learning
about **digital tools and**
services helps their
business grow

“Ignite has shown us how to promote our products and negotiate through social media, how to retain our customers, and how to use web payments. This training has helped us a lot.”

- Female, 46 (Peru)



Impact Training

Clients were asked about the training they had received from CARE.

Top 3

reported takeaways:

1. Financial management
2. Business planning
3. Digital marketing

“The lessons are excellent. The experts taught us a lot of good ideas and mentored us to feel more confident and stronger.”

Female, 50 (Vietnam)

Majority

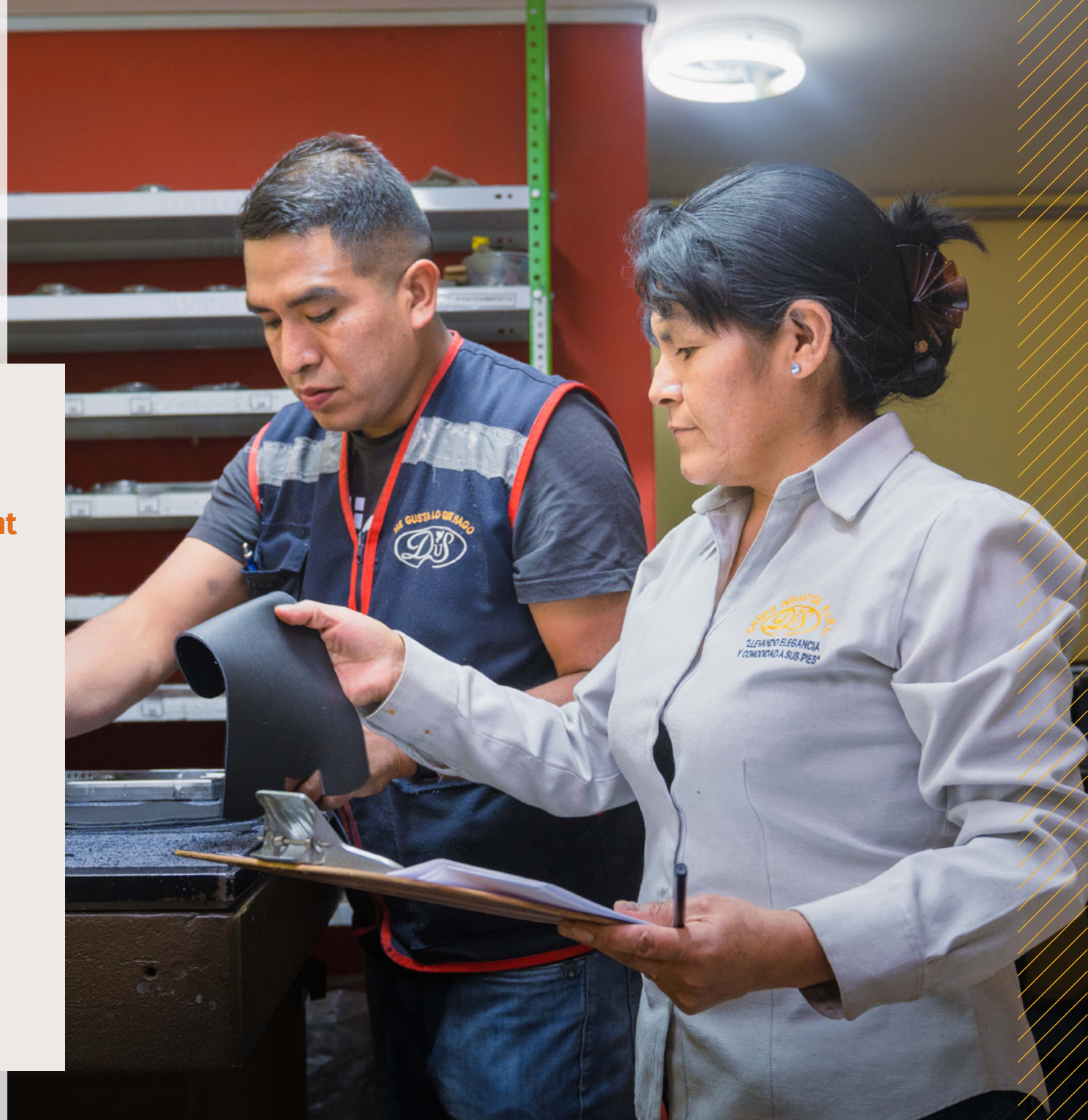
of clients agree that trainings were important to business growth

Top 3 training benefits:

1. Higher sales and revenue
2. Better planning and management
3. Better financial management

“I learned about new tools and techniques, how to deal with customers, and having specific hours of service.”

Female, 29 (Peru)



Impact on Women

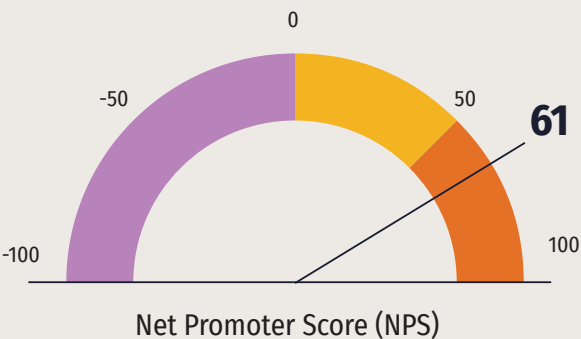
The Ignite Program looks at capabilities, confidence, business growth, and financial resilience for women-led micro and small enterprises (MSEs) to grow. Through our programming, we’ve made progress in the following for women:

Women’s Economic Justice

89% of women-led MSEs said their confidence in running the business has increased since working with CARE

91% of women-led MSEs say they have applied what they have learned from Ignite training and skills building

Female Net Promoter Score (NPS)



Female Customer Effort Score (CES)

4.37/5

“I made more profit selling through social networks and my delivery schedule and online prices were more attractive to my customers.”

– Female, 33 (Peru)

Quality of Life

90% of female clients report improved quality of life

81% of female clients report improvement in stress levels

Business Skills

79% of female clients agree working with CARE and learning about digital tools and services helps their business grow

85% of female clients report increased ability to manage finances



Business Growth and Employment

79% Of female clients tell us the program has contributed to an increase in their business sales

79% of female clients report CARE has helped achieve their business goals

83% of female clients say CARE has contributed to their business use of digital tools and services

79% of female clients agree working with CARE and learning about digital tools and services helped their business grow

“The course has partly helped me improve my business and necessary skills such as planning and online sales when running a business. I am more confident and less stressed when running my business.”

– Female, 46 (Vietnam)

Financial Resilience

55% of female clients report this was their first opportunity to access loans

54% of female clients report ease of raising emergency funds

Needs Improvement Barriers for Women

Women are still excluded from decision-making and face more barriers than men in accessing loans.

Each of the countries that CARE's Ignite Program is implemented in has a unique entrepreneurial market, macroeconomic climate, and cultural norms that led to a difference in gender research. The following are some women-specific results that came out of the study: (f = female / m = male)

Women are still excluded from decision-making

- Female clients are less likely to be the main financial decision-maker in their household (f: 48% vs. m: 65%)
- Female clients are less likely to be the main financial decision-maker in their business (f: 70% vs. m: 82%)
- Female clients are less likely to have 'all' control over business finances (f: 58% vs. m: 78%)

Women are less likely to get loans and face more barriers

- Women were more likely to be accessing loans for the first time (f: 55% vs. m: 48%)
- Female clients report more barriers in accessing loans (f: 64% vs. m: 58%)
- Male clients are more likely to have received loan services than female clients (f: 80% vs. m: 56%)



Recommendations

Gender Training

Bespoke gender training for FSPs is needed, including focusing on the value of women as clients

Focus on Confidence building and other skills

Training focused on confidence building and business skills development will contribute to an increase in female-led decision-making

Joint workshops

Workshops with women entrepreneurs and male family members focused on joint decision-making can support more balanced decision-making in the business and household

Needs Improvement Business Management

79% of clients continue to face challenges running their business

Top three business challenges faced*:



Operational challenges



Inadequate revenue/capital



Human resourcing challenges

*Responses to an open question were grouped into these categories.

While the majority of clients agree that trainings were important to business growth, training content & structure as well as the trainers themselves can be a cause for people to be detractors**. Across all three countries, clients reported wanting **improved training content & structure**

**Detractors are clients that rate you 0 to 6 out of 10 when asked to rate their likelihood to recommend your service to a friend on a scale of 0 to 10.



Recommendations

Training needs

Regularly consult clients on their training needs, and then adapt. For Ignite, this would focus on operational, human resourcing, and inadequate revenue related challenges.

Business management

While training can address challenges that clients face, business management skills can be managed with ongoing support, including mentoring, coaching, or peer support networks.

Mentoring

In addition to training, mentoring from people who have the skills and support networks can help micro and small businesses navigate challenges, maintain better cash flow, and make better business decisions.

Cash flow management

Micro and small businesses are less likely to be stable because of cash flow, particularly during unstable periods, and can have inadequate revenue and capital. Keep this in mind for both training content as well as ongoing support.

Needs Improvement Customer Service

Clients across the board want improved customer services from Financial Service Providers

Improved loan approval, lower interest rates, and flexible repayment terms all came up as suggestions for improvement. Across the board, all countries wanted to see improved customer services moving forward.

In this context, customers have complained of slow systems and unpleasant agents.

“They should train their client-facing employees on how to serve clients in a way that is more responsive, informative, and enthusiastic.”

-Female, 43 (Vietnam)

“Their system is slow and confusing. The data is not updated in their records, or maybe the software is down.”

- Male, 39 (Pakistan)



Recommendations

Train and incentivize loan officers

Reaching this segment isn't just about product adaptations. It requires attention to touchpoints across the entire customer journey. One of those critical touchpoints is loan officers. Financial service providers (FSPs) need to commit to intentionally serving their female customers. Consider how to better train and incentivize loan officers to serve this segment.

Improve software for customer interface

Slow processes and extended wait time is also a pain point for customers. FSPs should invest in optimizing interface and software to be more efficient.

Adapt loans for the needs of this segment

Clients running microbusinesses continue to seek product cycles that match their business needs. Invest in adapting loans for this underserved segment. It's important to note that clients want flexible repayment terms, shorter (30, 45, 90 days) rather than longer, likely because MSEs have seasonality and don't want to be paying debt all year long.

Needs Improvement Demand for Digital

While over 4 in 5 clients report CARE's contribution to their digital usage, we can improve this even further by reducing barriers such as:



“Provide us more training on how to handle digital tools.”

- Female, 65 (Peru)

“I would prefer if they would get us in touch with countries abroad so we can maximize our sales through online platforms.”

- Female, 50 (Pakistan)



Recommendations

Future-proof by investing in digital capability building

While we know that we're effective in getting people online, digitalization isn't a one-off tool to get marketing. It requires a bigger investment in both capabilities and ongoing support. Digital skills are essential to survive in the digital economy and there's an urgency to build digital skills.

Explore digital coach matching

More effort needs to be put into digital capability building while maintaining a human touch. One way could be to match with digital coaches so it's not an overwhelming digital journey.

Adapt training for different age groups

Expectedly, clients using digital in all three countries were younger, compared to older (Pakistan 70% vs. 56%, Peru 72% vs. 59%, Vietnam 97% vs. 89%). Training must be adapted to cater to different age groups.

Growing women-led micro and small enterprises

CARE Women's Entrepreneurship focuses on the following:



Investing in Women

Women entrepreneurs drive economic growth, are better credit customers, fast adopters of ecommerce, and reinvest in their households and local communities.



Women Centered-Design

Our WE programs aim to reduce the unique barriers women entrepreneurs face by putting women at the center of the design process.



Micro and Small Businesses

We typically focus on businesses that are growth-oriented, generally with two to ten employees and have been in operation for more than two years.

We work with and listen to women entrepreneurs to ensure that the tailored products and services we develop are fit for purpose. By listening to women, we help to remove the barriers that hold them back.



“When it comes to digital and social networks it has been very complicated for me, with the training I am learning and my son helps me a lot.”

Elizabeth Vargas Vilca
Ignite participant and business owner, Peru



“Women entrepreneurs drive loan portfolio growth. We expect this partnership will support VPBank to increase our women SME customer base from 5 to 10%.”

Dao Gia Hung
Deputy Head of the SME Division at VPBank, Vietnam



“After the Ignite training, I created accounts with JazzCash and EasyPaisha (mobile money accounts) which made things very convenient for our clients as they are accessible in all the regions of the country.”

Hina Butt
Ignite participant and business owner, Pakistan

THE OPPORTUNITY

The business rationale for investing in women's entrepreneurship is indisputable. Enabling women to gain better access to finance could unlock \$330bn USD in annual global revenue. It's not just enormous social impact, it's also good business.



Research shows that not only are women starting businesses at higher rates than men, on average their enterprises are also more profitable.



Women also tend to be better clients for financial institutions and tend to employ more women.



Bringing women-led enterprises into the digital economy allows them to reinvest in their own communities and households and contribute to their countries' economies.

PARTNER WITH US

Now is the time to scale these activities and their global reach. Please contact us to hear about more opportunities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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