



Unlocking access
to finance for
small businesses
around the world





strive

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Thanks to the training and mentorship I received through Mastercard Strive, I now understand the process of getting a loan and how to manage my business finances better. In just three days, I secured my first loan to renovate my kitchen and buy new tools—next, I’m planning to expand with a new kitchen and a store.

Lilis

Owner of Simping Bi Lilis, Purwakarta, Indonesia



Bridging the financing gap

Small businesses face a \$5.2 trillion financing gap, limiting their access to capital for growth and innovation. In low- and middle-income countries, many struggle with high borrowing costs, lack of collateral, and complex loan requirements, with women-led businesses facing additional barriers.

Through collaborating with a diverse ecosystem of partners, including fintechs, NGOs, and government agencies, Mastercard Strive is supporting millions of small businesses around the world to overcome these financial barriers by:

■ OFFERING SMALL BUSINESSES ACCESS TO CAPITAL

through loans, credit tools, alternative data, and funding instruments. In India, our partners enabled KYC documents to be stored on the blockchain, simplifying the process for women entrepreneurs to share their financial information with banks.

■ PARTNERING WITH LOCALLY-TRUSTED ORGANIZATIONS

to better enable small businesses on their financial journeys through digital tools to access funding and digital financial services. These tools include customer engagement platforms, digital savings, financial marketplaces, and upskilling courses. About half of small businesses offered loans through the Strive Women program reported they couldn't find a better alternative, highlighting the value of tailored products.

■ ENABLING OUR LOCAL PARTNERS

with the tools and resources to support small businesses by enhancing their digital infrastructure, providing technical assistance, de-risking product development, and unlocking investment opportunities. Through four Innovation Funds, we've supported partners to test and build sustainable financial solutions. In the Philippines and Cambodia, we supported Boost Capital to include financial education training in underwriting for small businesses.

Impact in numbers



■ SMALL BUSINESSES ARE INCREASINGLY TESTING AND ADOPTING DIGITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

We've seen strong progress in digital and financial inclusion across multiple countries.

80% of small businesses within local Chambers of Commerce have adopted cashless payment tools in India.

51% of small businesses supported by the Strive Women program in Peru, Vietnam, and Pakistan, secured loans for the first time, with some even accessing a second one.

■ SMALL BUSINESSES ARE BUILDING GREATER FINANCIAL HEALTH AND RESILIENCE

The majority of small businesses in several markets using digital products reported improved financial management, and many were able to repay loans on time.

60% of those supported through the Strive Women program found it easier to access emergency funds.

70% of external studies mapped by Mastercard Strive highlighted the positive impact of digital credit on small businesses.

■ ACCESS TO FINANCE IS ENABLING SMALL BUSINESSES TO GROW AND CREATE JOBS

The majority of small businesses have gained clients from new markets, increased revenues and profits, and hired more employees.

80% of micro retailers increased revenue with digital credit and market insights from our partner, Boost Technology in Nigeria.

30% of small businesses who used digital financial products as part of our program with Accion reported an increase in business growth activities.

Recommendations



MEET SMALL BUSINESSES WHERE THEY ARE

Human-centered design ensures that digital tools are both relevant and effective. Our partner CARE works with partners to disaggregate data by gender, conducting in-depth interviews and focus groups, and testing concepts with women entrepreneurs to ensure that products and services remain relevant and demand-driven.



BUILD TRUST THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND HIGH-TOUCH SUPPORT

Small businesses often need extra support to trust and adopt digital tools, especially in markets where concerns about scams are common. To build confidence, we've partnered with trusted organizations worldwide, leveraging local champions, peer networks, and face-to-face interaction.



BUNDLE DIGITAL TOOLS WITH EDUCATIONAL CONTENT TO BOOST ENGAGEMENT

When financial tools are paired with education, adoption rates increase. An external study in Tanzania found that women entrepreneurs who received both training and mobile savings access saved 35% more than those with only accounts. Financial education customers tend to be more financially responsible. In Cambodia, our partner observed that small businesses consuming financial education content were 15% more likely to have repaid their loans early or on time in the past.



PEER NETWORKS PLAY A VITAL ROLE

Communities of like-minded small business owners, particularly women, drive real behavior change by offering not only support but also shared knowledge and encouragement to take on new digital tools. In several regions, we've found Facebook communities to be ideal for real-time interaction, as entrepreneurs can exchange ideas, experiences, challenges, and solutions on the social platform.



Moving forward: Opportunities for the future

Building on past initiatives, Mastercard Strive continues to prioritize diverse, local partnerships with a deep understanding of small businesses' needs and trust. For example, in Indonesia, we work with the government, banks, and other financial institutions to democratize access to credit, particularly for women-led small businesses. In Argentina and Mexico, our partner Nilus is enhancing food security by expanding trade credit for their community leaders, who are women-led small retailers.



Learn more about how Mastercard Strive is
unlocking access to finance for small businesses
www.strivecommunity.org