

BREAKING GROWTH BARRIERS

for Women Impact Entrepreneurs in Indonesia



Acknowledgements

Breaking Growth Barriers for Women Impact Entrepreneurs

was a study conducted by UN Global Pulse, through Pulse Lab Jakarta's team, in collaboration with The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in Indonesia. This study is part of WeEmpowerAsia, a joint program of the European Union and UN Women, which aims to increase the number of women who lead and participate in private-sector businesses in seven countries across Asia, including Indonesia.

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Setting the Context

In growing their businesses, women face systemic challenges in accessing financial capital, support network and training opportunities. These constraints are exacerbated by societal norms and regulatory barriers to business expansion, making it difficult for women to grow their businesses. Despite the importance of women entrepreneurs in economic and social transformation, these challenges tend to perpetuate the gender gap in enterprise growth. Globally, women own or run half of all small businesses, but only a third of more established medium-sized businesses. This is a trend that is also observed in Indonesia (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), 2021).

Recognizing the imperative of supporting women entrepreneurs in the impact sector who often face a myriad of systemic factors that prevent them from growing their businesses, Pulse Lab Jakarta (PLJ) through a joint study with UN Women Indonesia aimed to gain a deeper understanding on how gender biases – which results from norms and stereotypes – function as barriers for women impact entrepreneurs in growing their businesses. By impact entrepreneurs, we mean those whose businesses are not only focused on generating profit to grow, but also those that contribute to improving social and environmental impact (ANGIN, 2020a). These businesses often focus on sectors that contribute to the SDGs, such as health, care, agriculture sectors and others.

Our primary research questions were:

- How do women impact entrepreneurs define growth and make business decisions? What are the similarities and differences between business growth mental models of women impact entrepreneurs and their man counterparts, as well as ecosystem enablers?
- How do gender biases shape the decisions and experiences of women impact entrepreneurs in growing their businesses? How do these aspects influence the way ecosystem enablers act in supporting or inhibiting the business growth of women impact entrepreneurs?
- What are the emerging signals for change that can be further leveraged into systemic interventions to support the growth of women-led impact enterprises?

Methodology

This study is guided by systemic design, a qualitative methodology that integrates processes for investigating and analyzing social systems with strategies for designing and intervening in such systems. Our systemic design approach is translated into a set of methods that included a desk review of global literature on women's entrepreneurship and initiatives to support their growth; in-depth interviews with 48 impact entrepreneurs; triangulation interviews with 7 representatives of ecosystem enablers; and participant observation, both remotely and in-person, in a diverse range of events organized by ecosystem enablers on research and interventions to support the growth of women businesses.

Our study focuses on growth-oriented and tech-enabled impact entrepreneurs who have grown their businesses beyond the initiation and start-up phases. Throughout the in-depth interview, we learned about the entrepreneurship journeys of men and women (44 respondents), 28 of whom were women impact entrepreneurs and 16 of whom were men impact entrepreneurs. As the study aims to not only understand the point of view of impact entrepreneurs, we also conducted triangulation interviews with 7 ecosystem enablers – the many actors working to support the growth and economic empowerment of entrepreneurs in Indonesia. These ranged from investors, business associations, mentors and development programs, to government representatives.

Key Insights:

How do gender biases function as barriers preventing women entrepreneurs from growing their businesses?

Over the course of learning about impact entrepreneurs' growth milestones, pitfalls, and their anticipated growth trajectories, we identified three key insights around systemic barriers preventing women entrepreneurs from growing their businesses.



Women impact entrepreneurs are just as growth-oriented and risk-taking as men. The primary difference is in their approach.

In our interviews, we asked women and men impact entrepreneurs to reflect on their entrepreneurial journeys from intention to start-up and the sustaining phase. In addition, we also asked them to discuss their anticipated business growth trajectories. We identified a similar vision and ambition for growth, as well as a similar set of enablers for growth. Despite these similarities, we identified a difference in their underlying rationale related to decision-making process, or in other words, their mental models for approaching growth and risk.

For women impact entrepreneurs, sustainable growth is achieved through stages and taking calculated risks. Instead of fast growth, women impact entrepreneurs strive for steady growth trajectories, whereby they take the time to test whether they have a viable business model before tapping into support networks or approaching investors. In contrast, men impact entrepreneurs consider aggressive growth as the best risk mitigation strategy. They see the impact sector in Indonesia as relatively young, and therefore believe impact entrepreneurs need to educate the market while building demand. There is constant competition with each other over a small market share. The biggest risk that they see in running their businesses is losing out to better-resourced competitors.

Regardless of their prior experience attracting investments, every entrepreneur we spoke with indicated that attracting investors is the primary enabler of business growth. However, we heard from women impact entrepreneurs that finding investors for their scale-up plans is difficult. Women require investments at a later stage of their businesses, as well as investors who are open to a realistic growth projection due to their staged approach to growth. In reality, the majority of investors believe that taking a more aggressive approach to growth will be more profitable and will result in a faster return on investment.



Gender bias impedes women's ability to leverage critical enablers that are needed to grow their businesses, particularly when they are pregnant or have young children.

In Indonesia, attitudes toward women's roles at home and at work are changing. According to *the 2020 Social Norms, Attitudes, and Practices (SNAP)* survey, men increasingly believe in the need to share childcare arrangements with their wives, while women still feel pressured to bear primary responsibility for childcare. We discovered that only women identified family support as a key enabler for business growth, particularly among those who are married with young children. This is one of many examples of how gender bias affects women's experiences when making decisions and taking action to expand their businesses.

This study uncovered how gender bias acts as a barrier to leveraging the critical enablers that are needed for women impact entrepreneurs' growth. Individually, both men and women emphasize the importance of improving their leadership skills to meet the complex challenges of a scaled-up business, but women express more self-doubt about their leadership abilities. At the family level, women impact entrepreneurs' time for self-development is limited by childcare responsibilities, unlike their man counterparts. At the company level, impact entrepreneurs assume responsibility for developing their employees' skills and creating an equal work environment, but women go a step further by establishing workplace policies to support female employees.

At the business community level, we identified two barriers. First, investors tend to see pregnancy and motherhood as a risk. Second, women-only support networks assist women entrepreneurs in gaining access to business opportunities as well as moral support. However, despite the rise of women-only spaces, women entrepreneurs continue to face difficulties in finding the right support network for their stage of growth. We have observed that while some business associations, particularly those dominated by men, can be hostile to women, women-only spaces can be intimidating due to the dominant 'lean-in' narrative.



Care work entrepreneurs are demonstrating significant growth potential, but systemic interventions are needed to scale the care sector.

The care work entrepreneurs involved in our study are spread across three kinds of services: i) daycare and early learning centers, ii) home care, as well as iii) senior living facilities. Each of them reported that their businesses were profitable in the first half of 2022, roughly two and a half years after the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Indonesia. They expressed optimism about future growth over the next five years.

They identified a common set of challenges that could stymie their future growth, namely a shortage of skilled care workers. This stems from the fact that paid care work is not yet viewed as a desirable profession, due to low wages and the widespread perception that these are low-skilled jobs. The care work industry also has high expectation for excellence, which causes investors to view the care sector as unappealing due to the high risk. Care work entrepreneurs shared that customers have zero tolerance for perceived mistakes, particularly in childcare services, and this could have a negative impact on the reputation of their businesses. Care work entrepreneurs who participated in our study also admitted that their businesses are actually not affordable for those who need them the most.

Indonesia does not have comprehensive datasets to estimate the supply and demand for healthcare services. Without such data, signals identified through qualitative research will continue to be viewed as anecdotal and insufficient to prompt action. Unless the foundation of Indonesia's care economy is strengthened, the future care industry will continue to serve only the upper-middle class. To address the issue, a wide range of policy support rather than a single instrument is required, including social protection, infrastructure, data, labor policies, among others.



Opportunities for Action

Our set of opportunities for action leverages existing interventions by ecosystem enablers that can support women impact entrepreneurs in Indonesia. In developing these recommendations, we aimed for a mix of gender-smart and gender transformative solutions.



Diversify financing options to accommodate a wider range of growth trajectories

Impact enterprises have a wide range of growth trajectories, but investors are biased towards an aggressive growth model. This is a barrier for women impact entrepreneurs who prefer a staged, sustainable approach to growth. To change this dynamic, we recommend two areas for action.

First, demystify gender lens investing. GLI is a promising intervention to close the funding gap for women impact entrepreneurs. Despite the growing body of evidence, misperception around the practice and profitability of GLI remains a barrier to its wider adoption by investors and entrepreneurs alike. Second, offer blended finance options. This is a multi-stakeholder financing approach that uses capital from public or philanthropic funds to attract private sector investment, by lowering the risk, demonstrating the validity of new markets, and creating incentives for investments.



Foster gender-smart support networks

Those who organize support networks for women impact entrepreneurs are responding to gender biases in their ecosystem, by organizing women-only spaces. While this reduces women's access constraints to networking, mentorship, and training opportunities, our study identified the need to go a few steps further into gender-smart programming, interventions that carefully consider gendered power dynamics and proactively address women's specific needs.

This can be achieved by first promoting resilient leadership as an exemplar of success. To avoid perpetuating the “superwoman” narrative—those who can lean in and do it all, leading their business to high growth against all odds while smoothly dealing with their responsibilities as a mother – resilient leadership highlights women's stories about navigating growth challenges at a pace that works for them, as well as how they access resources to support themselves through rough patches in their entrepreneurial journey. The second is by designing guidelines for gender-smart programming that can be useful for both organizers of women-only spaces and broader support networks, especially to accommodate women entrepreneurs at a later growth stage, who aspire to be seen as equals to their man counterparts.



Mobilize action towards a future-fit care economy

Our study has demonstrated how unpaid care work can become a barrier to women's economic empowerment, as well as the high likelihood of increased demands for care work in the future. Addressing this issue does not only benefit women and impact entrepreneurs, it will also boost the economic empowerment of women across different income levels and improve the well-being of everyone.

Amongst our recommendations, this opportunity area is the most gender-transformative – directly addressing norms and social systems that underlie a problem. Gender transformative solutions are challenging—it works in the long term, often taking a multigenerational perspective and involving multiple actors in the ecosystem. This study suggests five specific starting points; (1) Collect and share data on the supply and demand of care services; (2) Establish paid care work as a respected profession; (3) Strengthen the business case for investment into the care sector; (4) Promote positive norm of men's role as caregivers; and (5) Encourage and incentivize employer-supported care and domestic work packages.



Moving Forward

Our study showed that women impact entrepreneurs tend to face gender bias in terms of accessing ecosystem enablers needed to grow their businesses. These barriers have adverse consequences on how women entrepreneurs develop their skills, shoulder the additional mental load and unpaid care work, access funding, and benefit from support networks that are intended to support their business growth. Breaking these barriers is essential for women to thrive as individuals as well as entrepreneurs.

We have presented potential high-impact opportunity actions as options, acknowledging that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to this problem. Breaking gender-related barriers to the growth of women's impact enterprises require a systemic approach, and these opportunities for action are intended to be explored in collaboration with key stakeholders such as the government, investors, support network organizers, researchers and academia, civil society organizations, and development partners.

Pulse Lab Jakarta together with UN Women encourages interested organizations to make use of the insights from this study to develop ideas that can be transformed into supporting the growth of women entrepreneurs. With a concerted effort from different stakeholders, we can transform into a society that provides equitable economic empowerment for all.

CHAPTER 01

Setting the Context



The Gender Gap in the Growth of Impact Entrepreneurship

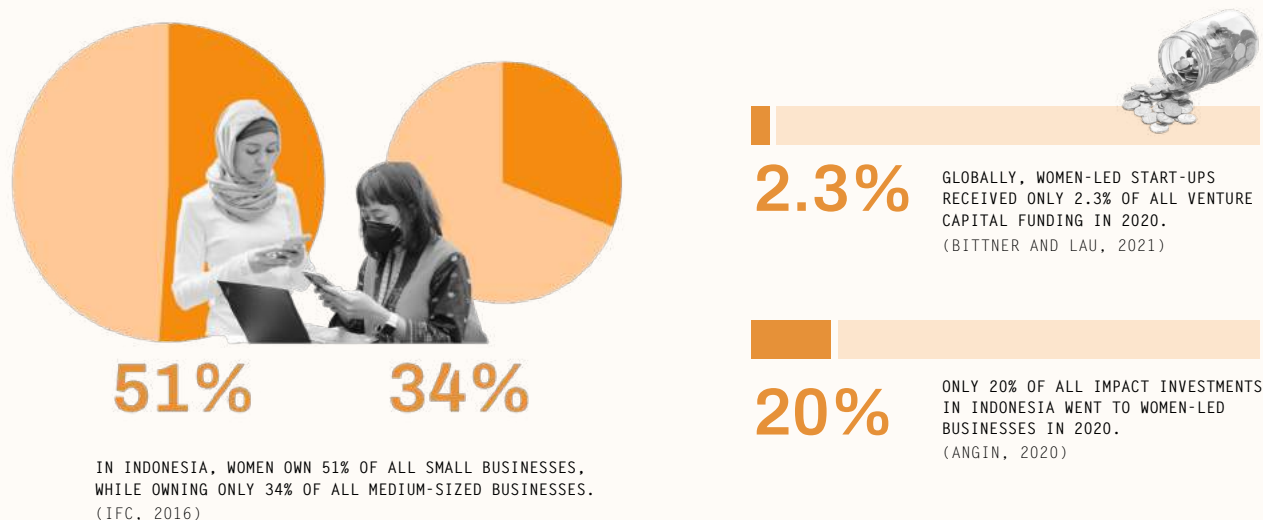


Figure 1. Statistical findings around women-owned / led business in Indonesia

Women entrepreneurs are essential contributors to economic and social transformation. Demonstrated by several research¹, women entrepreneurs tend to employ more women as their businesses grow, and in doing so help more women to enter the formal economy. This creates a multiplier effect for poverty eradication and economic growth. The 2021 Asia Smart Gender Investing Forum also underlined that investing in women-led businesses is a strategic and profitable decision, with women-owned start-ups generating twice as much revenue per dollar as men. Furthermore, investing in start-up teams with at least one female founder has resulted in 25% higher valuations.

As these examples illustrate, women entrepreneurs are critical in driving recovery efforts from the economic shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic, and are likewise vital for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Notwithstanding, a gender gap in the growth of enterprises remains. The 2021 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) survey found that women either own or run half of all small businesses globally, but with regard to more established medium-sized businesses, they only own or run a third of them.

This trend is also observed in Indonesia. Existing analysis² have provided insights into explaining this gap, in particular indicating that women are clustered in less profitable sectors than men, and that the majority of women-owned businesses are born out of necessity instead of an orientation towards growth (although the results of the 2021 GEM survey suggest that women are participating in high-growth businesses at much higher rates than many people may realize, including in Indonesia). This same study advocates for future initiatives to move beyond the discourse of increasing the number of women entrepreneurs, to a focus on supporting them to grow their businesses.

¹ See, for instance, reports from World Bank, “Breaking Barriers: Female Entrepreneurs Who Cross Over to Male-Dominated Sectors” (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2022) and UN Secretary General’s High Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment, “A Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women’s Economic Empowerment” (New York: UNHLP, 2016).

² For example, World Bank Group, “Women Entrepreneurs in Indonesia: A Pathway to Increasing Shared Prosperity” (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2016), and Payal Patel, “Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Development Interventions on Women Entrepreneurs,” Publication (Geneva: ILO, 2014).

Beyond Statistics: Applying Systemic Design to Understand Gender Biases as Barriers to Business Growth



Global studies³ have concluded that women face a range of constraints in growing their businesses, namely challenges in accessing financial capital; limited support networks to access business-related resources and advice (such as mentorship, business associations, and peer-to-peer networking opportunities); and training opportunities – all of which are exacerbated by societal norms, as well as regulatory constraints for business expansion.

It is not surprising that most efforts to support women’s entrepreneurship focus on addressing the aforementioned barriers. However, the barriers faced by women entrepreneurs are more systemic. For instance, women at times have to deal with unpaid care work and gender-based discriminatory policies. The interplay between all of these barriers are compounded, hindering women from growing their businesses (UNICEF, 2021). In addition, current evidence also suggests that the existing solutions are more effective in supporting the initiation of new businesses, rather than supporting the growth of existing businesses (ILO, 2014).

UN Women Indonesia and Pulse Lab Jakarta view entrepreneurship as more than the act of starting and operating a business; it is seen as part of women’s economic empowerment – the ability to succeed and advance economically, as well as to make and act on economic decisions (UN High Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment, 2016). This means acknowledging that the barriers faced by women entrepreneurs in growing their businesses are rooted in unaddressed gender inequalities, including the stereotypes, norms, and biases that shape how women entrepreneurs make their business decisions and access opportunities.

This collaborative study between UN Women Indonesia and Pulse Lab Jakarta aims to gain a deeper understanding on how gender bias – which results from norms and stereotypes – function as barriers for women entrepreneurs attempting to grow their businesses, in particular those who focus on the impact sector. The study is guided by systemic design, a qualitative methodology that combines the processes used to investigate and analyze social systems along with strategies to design and intervene in such systems.

³ See Cirera, Xavier, Qasim, Qursum, “Supporting Growth-Oriented Women Entrepreneurs: A Review of the Evidence and Key Challenges,” (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2014) and UNESCAP, “Fostering Women’s Entrepreneurship in ASEAN: Transforming Prospects, Transforming Societies” (Bangkok: UNESCAP, 2017)



Systemic design is informed by both human-centered design competencies (deep empathy, generative research methods and visualizing practices) and systems thinking skills (mapping different structural factors that shape human behavior) that seek to uncover the intangible dynamics and underlying mental models that are shaping behaviors and social phenomena (Bijl Brouwer and Malcolm, 2020).

In formulating our research approach, we also adopt the UN High Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment’s recommendation, which underscores that transformational changes to support women’s economic empowerment need to address unequal gender dynamics across four levels in order to be successful: individual; social (family, friends and business colleagues); community (business associations, mentors and investors); and society (the domain of policies and regulations).

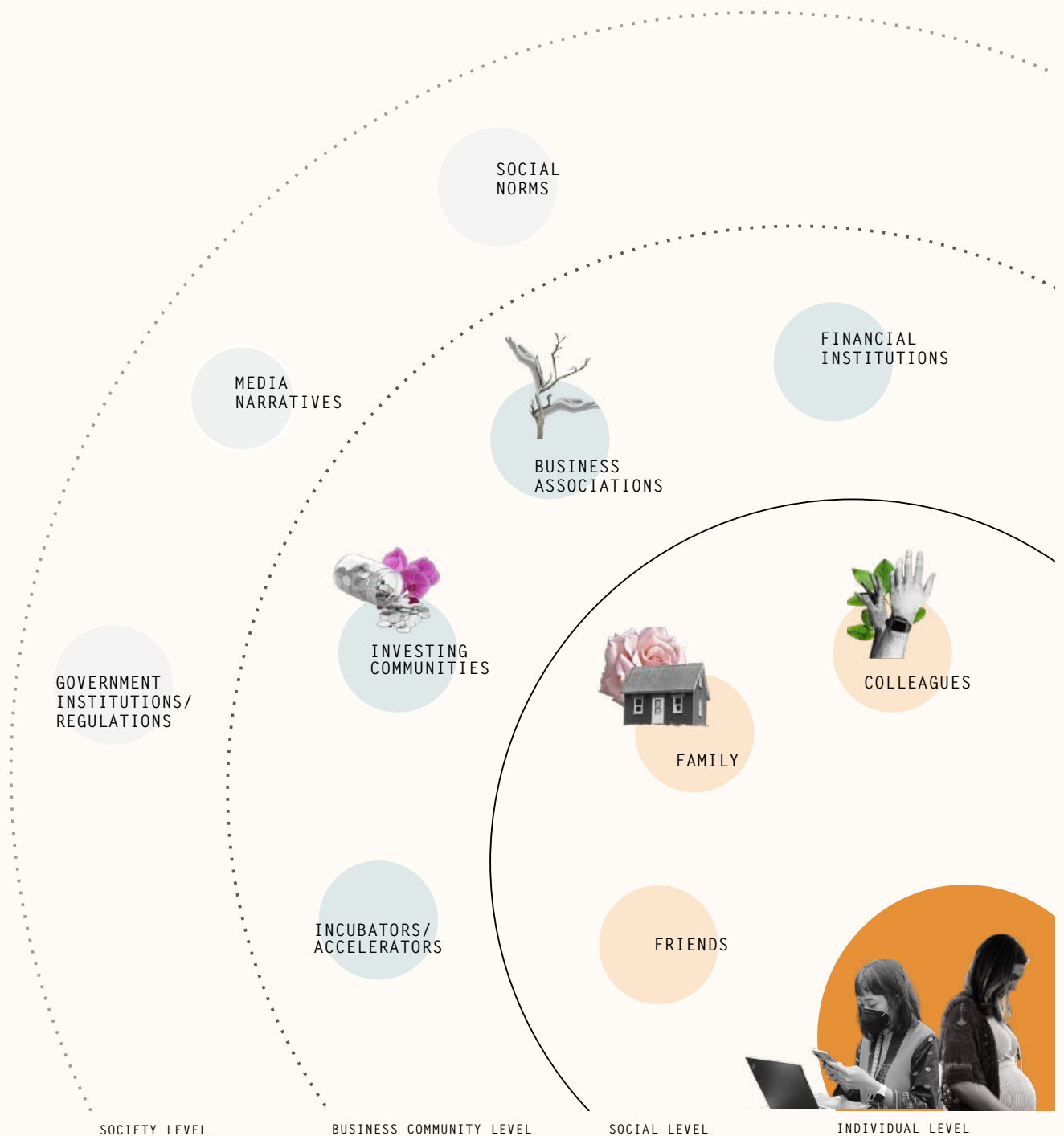


Figure 2. Systemic Enabler for Women’s Economic Empowerment
(Adapted from the UN High Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment (2017))



Our Research in Action

We seek to complement the existing studies mentioned before in the following ways:

First, the study aims to not only understand women entrepreneurs' point of view, but also the standpoint of ecosystem enablers —the many actors working to support the growth and economic empowerment of entrepreneurs in Indonesia, ranging from investors, business associations, mentors, development programs, to government representatives. In particular, the study's intent is to identify mental models, which may be described as the unconscious, underlying worldview that can promote or hinder change by facilitating or limiting the way different people see the world (Bijl Brouwer and Malcolm, 2020). In discourse around systemic design, mental models form the deepest level of a system and serve as the strongest leverage point for change. By exploring the mental models of women and men entrepreneurs, as well as various ecosystem enablers of business growth and the roles of women entrepreneurs, we seek to uncover and bring to the fore the hidden, underlying tensions between the experiences and worldviews of women entrepreneurs and those working to enable their business growth. It is envisioned that this process will be useful in facilitating ideation for less obvious yet transformative, long-term solutions.

Second, the study focuses on growth-oriented and tech-enabled impact entrepreneurs who have grown their businesses beyond the initiation, start-up phase. These entrepreneurs are either owners or C-level executives of small (10-49 employees) and medium-sized businesses (50-250 employees)⁴. By impact entrepreneurs, we mean those whose businesses are not only focused on generating profit to grow, but also those that contribute to improving social and environmental impact (ANGIN, 2020a). These businesses often focus on sectors that contribute to the SDGs, such as health, care, agriculture sectors and others. This study focuses on businesses that are currently in the sustaining or scale-up stage, as well as those that use digital technologies as an integral part of their business model as a proxy to determine growth orientation and potential (GEM, 2021 and Rose, 2021). Furthermore, women entrepreneurs are defined as majority shareholders (owning at least 51%) and/or having the business license ownership (S-DNKI, 2020). By focusing on businesses of similar size, sector, orientation and growth-stage⁵, this study is able to hone in on the interplay between gender stereotypes, norms, biases, in addition to decisions on business growth.

⁴ According to the Angel Investment Network in Indonesia (ANGIN), more than 80% of impact businesses in Indonesia in 2018 are categorized as micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). We further focus on small and medium enterprises to eliminate the mostly necessity-based businesses found among micro enterprises. We defined small and medium enterprises by the number of employees following recommendations from UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, "A Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment."

⁵ This study follows the entrepreneurial growth stages outlined in the Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship (2021): intention, start-up, sustain and scale.

Research Questions

This study focuses on the following questions:



- How do women impact entrepreneurs define growth and make business decisions? What are the similarities and differences between the mental models on business growth of women impact entrepreneurs and their male counterparts, as well as ecosystem enablers?



- How do gender biases, norms, and stereotypes shape the decisions and experience of women impact entrepreneurs in growing their business? How do they influence the way ecosystem enablers act in supporting or inhibiting the business growth of women impact entrepreneurs?



- What are the emerging signals for change that can be further leveraged into systemic interventions to support the growth of women-led impact enterprises?

Research Methods

The systemic design approach are translated into the following methods:



Desk review of global literature comprising peer-reviewed journals and research reports on women's entrepreneurship, as well as initiatives aimed at supporting the growth of women-owned enterprises.



In-depth interviews with 44 impact entrepreneurs, 28 of whom are women. The interviews focused on systematically mapping the entrepreneurship journey of women and men, which encompasses their achievements to date, as well as their anticipated growth trajectory. Besides identifying the enablers and barriers at play, this focus is also meant to pinpoint growth milestones and pitfalls. Given that the study was conducted at the height of the Omicron Wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted remotely through video-conferencing services. It also employed additional resources (summary of emerging findings from our research or results of existing surveys) as a prompt to elicit opinions and find out underlying beliefs of impact entrepreneurs.



Triangulation interviews with seven individuals representing ecosystem enablers, whereby emerging findings from our interviews with impact entrepreneurs were shared to identify tensions in the mental models of ecosystem enablers and women impact entrepreneurs. These interviews were undertaken through a mix of remote and in-person conversations.



Participant observation, both remotely and in-person, during a range of events organized by ecosystem enablers on research and interventions to support the growth of women impact entrepreneurship in Indonesia and the Southeast Asia region.

Fieldwork in Numbers



Desk Review

100+

GLOBAL LITERATURE OF
PEER REVIEWED AND
RESEARCH REPORTS.

08
MONTHS

MEDIA MONITORING
ON THE ONGOING DISCOURSE
ABOUT WOMEN IMPACT
ENTREPRENEURSHIP



In-Depth Interviews

28 WOMEN IMPACT
ENTREPRENEURS

24 MATURE
BUSINESSES

26 SMALL
BUSINESSES

16 MEN IMPACT
ENTREPRENEURS

20 YOUNG
BUSINESSES

18 MEDIUM
BUSINESSES

BUSINESS
SECTORS

08 HEALTH

07 ENVIRONMENT

04 AGRICULTURE
& FOOD

01 FISHERY

07 EDUCATION

05 CREATIVE
ECONOMY

04 FINTECH

08 AREAS IN
INDONESIA
Jakarta, Bandung, Denpasar
Surabaya, Yogyakarta,
Purbalingga, Bekasi, Bogor.

60 OF IN-DEPTH
INTERVIEWS
HOURS



Triangulation Interviews

08 OF TRIANGULATION
INTERVIEWS
HOURS

with **07** ECOSYSTEM
ENABLERS

Consisting of government, investors,
support network initiators
(businesses associations, mentorship
schemes, training providers),
development partners, researchers
or knowledge producers.



Participant Observation

16 OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION SESSIONS
IN VARIOUS PUBLIC FORUMS
AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS.
HOURS

Given the specific scope of our study, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations that are relevant for interpreting the key insights that emerged. The women and men impact entrepreneurs we talked to are founders and C-level executives of businesses that have not only survived but grew during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their experiences and worldviews represent a very specific cohort of entrepreneurs and, as a qualitative study, our findings are never meant to be generalized across the population.

Instead, the intention is to provide depth in discussing the gendered context in which women and men impact entrepreneurs work. We aim to learn from the lived experiences of this group of entrepreneurs and ecosystem enablers in order to surface hidden mental models that might be absent from deliberative forums and interventions, but are in fact crucial to designing transformative interventions for women's economic empowerment.





CHAPTER 02

Key Insights



Women impact entrepreneurs are just as growth-oriented and risk-taking as men. The only difference is in their approach.

Over the past decade, Indonesia has been the most active impact investment market in Southeast Asia, with a total of USD 276 million capital deployed between 2013 and 2020 (ANGIN, 2020a). Nevertheless, only 20% of the investment was made to women-led impact enterprises (Impact IDN, 2020).

An abundance of global literature⁶ has documented the widespread perception that women entrepreneurs are more risk averse and less inclined to grow their businesses compared to their man counterparts. In essence, this makes them less attractive to investors. However, there is a growing body of emerging evidence, that suggests this may not be the case.

A 2015 survey of more than 500 entrepreneurs in the UK found that women are just as interested in growing their businesses, and also see themselves as financial risk takers similar to their man counterparts⁷. *The 2021 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor* survey in Indonesia indicated that women may be more active in offering innovative products and reported higher growth expectations than men, even during the pandemic. The insights from our qualitative study echo these findings.

In our interviews, we asked women and men impact entrepreneurs to reflect on their entrepreneurial journey, from intention to the start-up and sustaining phase. The discussions also sought to examine their anticipated business growth trajectory. We identified a similar vision and ambition for growth among men and women impact entrepreneurs, which included plans for expanding their market reach or launching new products in the next few years.

"MY BUSINESS HAS TO BE PROFITABLE IF I WANT TO HAVE AN IMPACT. I HAVE TO THINK WITH A GROWTH MINDSET; IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO SUSTAIN THE BUSINESS AND EXTEND IMPACT."



WOMAN,
EDU TECH BUSINESS

⁶ Lex Borghans et al., "Gender Differences in Risk Aversion and Ambiguity Aversion," in IZA Discussion Papers, vol. 3985 (Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), 2009), Rachel Croson and Uri Gneezy, "Gender Differences in Preferences," *Journal of Economic Literature* 47, no. 2 (June 2009): 448–74, and Sharon A. Simmons et al., "Gender Gaps and Reentry into Entrepreneurial Ecosystems after Business Failure," *Small Business Economics* 53, no. 2 (2018): 517–31.

⁷ Centre for Entrepreneurs and Barclays, "Shattering Stereotypes: Women in Entrepreneurship" (London: Centre for Entrepreneurs, 2015).



For these impact entrepreneurs, growing the scale of their businesses is a requirement to increase their impact, which goes beyond reaching more customers (who will benefit from their products or services). They also see creating new employment opportunities as part of their impact.

Both women and men impact entrepreneurs share similar strategies for business growth, as well as similar views on the kinds of enablers that are critical to support the implementation of those strategies (as summarized in the figure below). Nonetheless, there is one notable difference: while obtaining family support was a dominant enabler in our conversations with women impact entrepreneurs, this was not the case for men. We will further discuss the gendered differences experienced in relation to enablers and barriers for business growth in the next insight.

STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS GROWTH ENABLERS FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

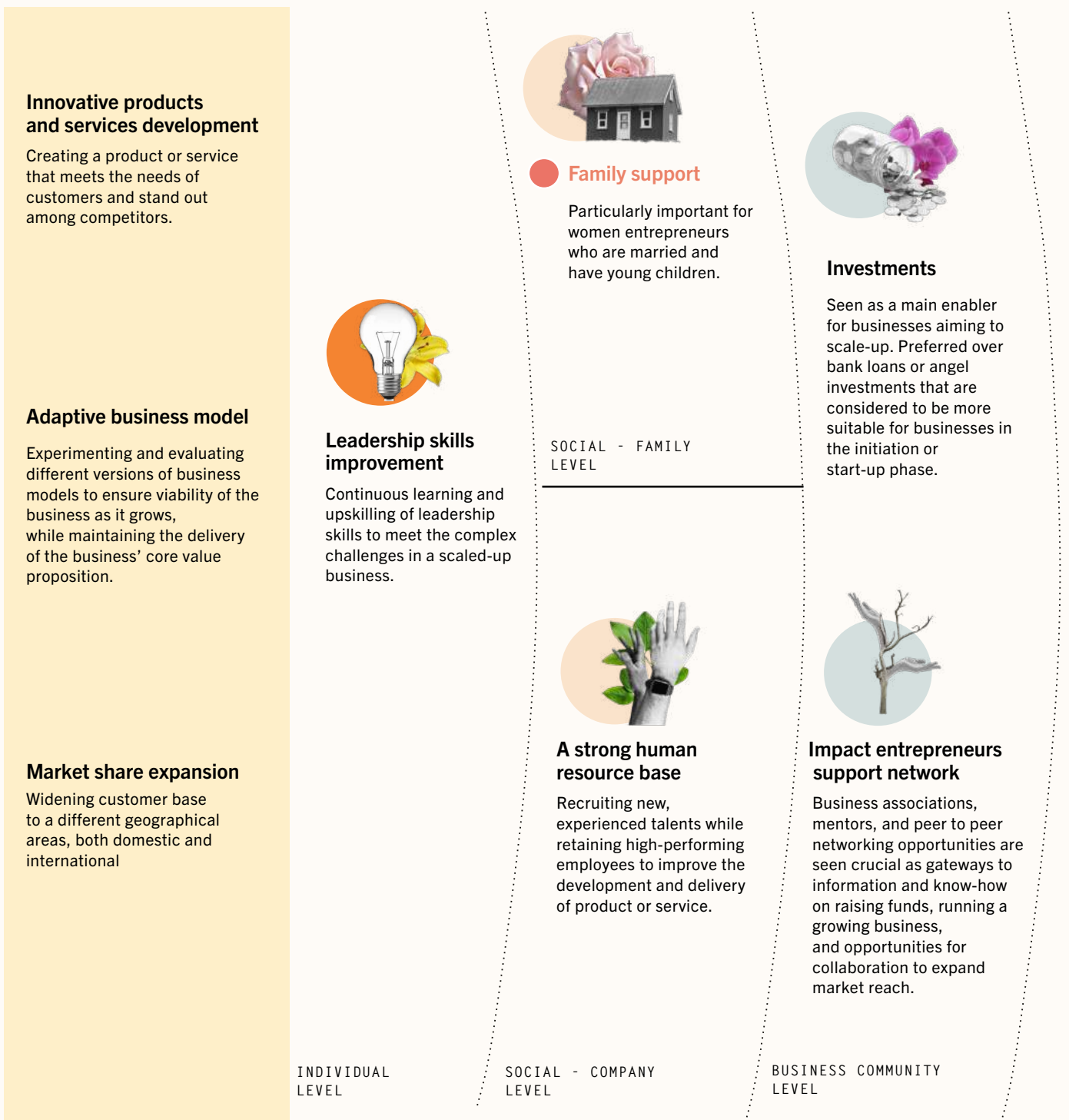


Figure 2. Strategies and Enablers for Business Growth for Impact Entrepreneurs

In addition to the strategies and enablers, there were commonalities in the set of challenges faced by women and men impact entrepreneurs working in the impact sector. Being part of a relatively new sector means impact entrepreneurs have to dedicate a substantial amount of effort to raise market awareness in order to build demand for their products or services. For instance, businesses offering counseling services stated that providing public education to counter the stigma around mental health is an essential part of their market share expansion. Likewise, waste management and sustainable biomaterials businesses also shared that their marketing plans need to be built on awareness raising of the climate crisis. All of the entrepreneurs we talked to integrate technology as a part of their business model. They also identified challenges in navigating the regulatory landscape that are still catching up with rapid changes brought on by digital transformation.

Two contrasting mental models on business growth and risk-taking

Although women and men impact entrepreneurs share similar ambitions and enablers for growth, we identified a difference in the underlying rationale behind their decision-making process — or in other words, their mental models for approaching growth and risk.

Women impact entrepreneurs: Sustainable growth is achieved through stages and taking calculated risks.

When discussing their entrepreneurial journey, the women we talked to emphasized the importance of building a sustainable business by taking calculated risks. They view a sustainable business as one that can withstand the stresses of expansion, while continuing to offer relevant, competitive products or services to their customers in the long run.

Instead of fast growth, women impact entrepreneurs strive for steady growth trajectories, whereby they take the time to test whether they have a viable business model before tapping into support networks or approaching investors. In fact, all of the women participating in our research whose businesses are fewer than five years old deliberately hold-off on investments, preferring to bootstrap and re-invest business profits as they are still focusing on building a solid foundation for their businesses.

The image that came to mind as we mapped their anticipated growth trajectory is one of a ladder, in which women impact entrepreneurs aim towards scaling up, but break down the process into a series of milestones they need to achieve one by one.

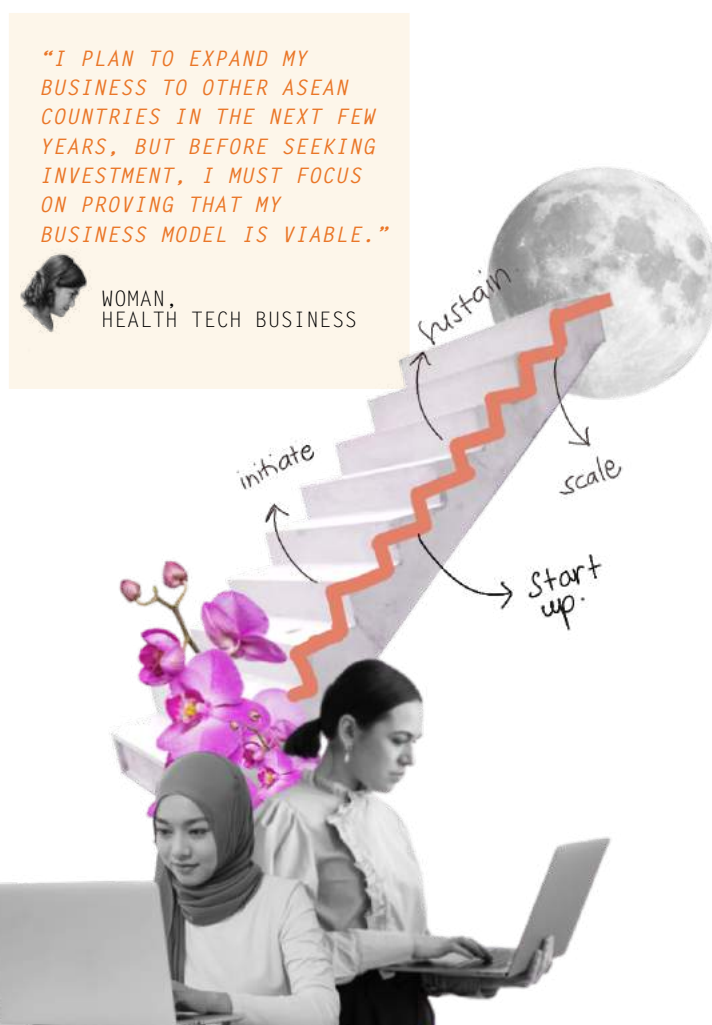


Figure 4. Illustration of the mental model for growth of women impact entrepreneur

Women impact entrepreneurs acknowledge that risk is inherent to entrepreneurship, but importantly, they recognise the distinction between reckless and calculated risks. Reckless risks are taken when entrepreneurs prioritize scale-up above the company's readiness, compromising the livelihood and well-being of staff members as well as resulting in loss of profits, or even bankruptcy. On the other hand, calculated risks are those that can be anticipated and mitigated. This is particularly important because they are working in relatively new sectors.

Decisions to take calculated risks are based on future projections that are built on solid evidence of past business performance, aiming for an achievable next stage of growth. Therefore, a staged, controlled approach to growth is a risk management strategy for women, which protects the integrity of both their businesses and their personal credibility as entrepreneurs. Our findings are in line with emerging studies that defy how entrepreneurial risk-taking has been narrowly defined in relation to an aggressive growth model and therefore views women as being more risk averse than men. These studies (for example, Centre for Entrepreneurs and Barclay, 2015 and the 2021 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor survey) argue for a broader lens in defining a range of growth models to better represent the realities of women entrepreneurs.

"WHEN WE SAY WE WANT TO GROW WE ARE AIMING FOR PROFITABILITY. UNLIKE OTHER START-UPS, WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN BURNING OUR WAY THROUGH INVESTMENT FUNDS WITHOUT A SOLID BUSINESS CASE."



WOMAN,
FEM TECH BUSINESS

"IF I MOVE TOO SLOW IN GROWING OUR BUSINESS, A BIGGER COMPETITOR WILL COME AND WIPE OUT MY TARGET MARKET, SO I LOOK FOR INVESTORS FROM DAY ONE."



MAN,
EDU TECH BUSINESS

▶ Men impact entrepreneurs: Aggressive growth is the best risk mitigation strategy

In contrast, men impact entrepreneurs consider aggressive growth as the best risk mitigation strategy. They see the impact sector in Indonesia as relatively young, so impact entrepreneurs need to educate the market while building demand, and therefore are competing with each other over a small market share. The biggest risk they see in running their businesses is losing out to better-resourced competitors. In order to stand-out, their businesses need to secure investments as early as possible to enable fast product development and roll out, as well as aggressive marketing.

Men impact entrepreneurs acknowledge that their preference for aggressive growth may not result in a stable trajectory. As the growth trajectories of many start-ups in the tech sector demonstrate, rapid growth can at times lead to product or service failure and employee lay-offs, and the size of the business may shrink and rise until they find stability. However, men impact entrepreneurs see these fluctuations as an inherent part of any growth-oriented business trajectory, instead of risks to prevent. For the women impact entrepreneurs we talked to, the case is different.

"THE UPS AND DOWNS OF BUILDING THE BUSINESS WILL BE THERE. WE JUST NEED TO ADAPT AND STRATEGIZE."



MAN,
SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING
BUSINESS



Figure 5. Illustration of the mental model for growth of men impact entrepreneur

Investors prefer the aggressive approach to growth

Some of the women and men impact entrepreneurs we talked to have successfully raised early-stage investments to support their business in the initiation and start-up stage. Regardless of their previous experience in attracting investments, every entrepreneur we talked to named securing investors as a main enabler for business growth. Both women and men discussed similar risks involved in equity investment, such as misaligned vision and loss of control over the direction of the business. At the same time, they acknowledge that the amount of funding required to scale up their businesses is higher than what could be provided through bank loans or angel investments (amounts which are more suitable for businesses that are in the initiation and start-up phase).

Women impact entrepreneurs shared that finding investors for their scale-up plans are challenging. Given their staged approach to growth, women require investments at a later stage of their businesses, in addition to investors who are open to a realistic projection for growth. In reality, the majority of investors perceive the aggressive approach to growth to be more profitable and with the expectation that it will bring a quicker return on investment. This could in part be caused by the concentration of financing options on the venture capital and private equity market in the Southeast Asia region⁸; however, the previously mentioned ANGIN study (2020a) highlighted that impact investors in Indonesia also mostly prefer the aggressive approach to growth and are less open to alternative growth pathways.

“WE WANT BUSINESS OWNERS TO MAXIMIZE INVESTMENT RETURNS. WE EXPECT THEM TO GROW BY MORE THAN 100 PER CENT IN THREE YEARS.”



INVESTOR

OPPORTUNITY AREA

How might we diversify financing options that cater to a wider variety of growth models?

Impact enterprises have a wide range of growth trajectories, but investors are biased towards an aggressive growth model. This is a barrier for women impact entrepreneurs who prefer a staged approach to growth.



⁸ UN Women, “Recap Report: Asia Gender-Smart Investing Forum” (UN Women, 2021), <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/02/recap-report-asia-gender-smart-investing-forum>.

Gender Lens Investing vs. the Meritocracy Myth

Gender Lens Investing (GLI), also known as gender smart investing, is the deliberate approach of incorporating gender considerations into investment analysis and decisions, which are intended to generate financial returns and positive impact on women, girls, and gender equality⁹. In practice, GLI is translated into investments to enterprises that practice gender diversity in their workforce and value chain; provide access to capital for women entrepreneurs; and provide products and services that benefit women and girls¹⁰.

Globally, GLI is on the rise, with USD 1.3 billion raised in 2019 for the East and Southeast Asia region¹¹. The women and men impact entrepreneurs we talked to are generally aware of GLI, however they have yet to consider it as a strategic investment option. The one woman entrepreneur who received GLI said that she was referred to the opportunity by a colleague, saying that although GLI as a concept is creating a buzz within her network, very few women entrepreneurs are aware of which investors actually offer this scheme.

In our conversations with impact entrepreneurs and ecosystem enablers, particularly investors and development organizations, we identified a misconception of GLI that can be an obstacle to its wider adoption, rooted in the idea of merit.

Many women and men impact entrepreneurs, as well as investors, narrowly understand GLI only as investing capital in women-owned and women-led businesses. This perception generates strong negative reactions. Both men entrepreneurs and investors we met underlined the importance of focusing on competency and 'objective' indicators, such as business plan and market expansion strategy, in making investment decisions, instead of based on the gender of the owner. They see GLI more as a philanthropic strategy rather than a profitable option for investors.

This is also a view held by some women impact entrepreneurs, who want to be viewed as competent as their man counterparts. They are concerned that receiving GLI will make their peers perceive them as recipients of affirmative action, rather than an entrepreneur with a profitable business.

The meritocracy argument against affirmative action in general has widely been debunked, with research highlighting that dominant frames of reference for merit contain implicit biases that devalue women's contributions and reinforces the worldview and privileges of the status quo¹². The same is true for GLI.

A growing body of research demonstrates that applying GLI unlocks large, untapped market opportunities and that women entrepreneurs have a much smaller rate of non-performing investments compared to men, which improve financial outcomes for investors overall¹³. This further highlights that the misconception against GLI is rooted more in the bias against the competitiveness of women-owned enterprises than evidence.

"WE INVEST BASED ON MERIT, NOT GENDER."



INVESTOR



9 Investing in Women, "Gender Lens Investing in Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam" (Investing in Women, 2021).

10 "40 Women Leaders GLI Spotlight Archives," 2020, Angin.ID (blog), accessed July 28, 2022.

11 Shinta Kamdani, "Gender Lens Investing Panel" (W20 Summit 2022, 2022).

12 Sarah Kaplan and Sonya Kunkel, "Meritocracy: From Myth to Reality," Gender and the Economy, February 12, 2017, and Stina Powell, "Gender Equality and Meritocracy. Contradictory Discourses in the Academy" (Uppsala, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, 2016),

13 "40 Women Leaders GLI Spotlight Archives."

Gender bias impedes women’s ability to leverage critical enablers that can help grow their businesses, particularly when they are pregnant or have young children.

Attitudes towards women’s role at home and at work in Indonesia are shifting. *The 2020 Social Norms, Attitudes and Practices (SNAP) Survey*¹⁴ indicates that urban millennials in Indonesia believe that women are just as capable as men in the workplace. The same survey also indicates that men increasingly believe in the need to share childcare arrangements with their wives. However, women still express that they feel pressured to bear the primary responsibility for childcare.

We have observed similar dynamics in our study. As we learned in the previous section, women and men impact entrepreneurs share similar enablers that they can leverage to implement the strategies required to grow their businesses. The stark difference is that only women identified family support as a key enabler for business growth, particularly among those who are married and have young children. This is one of the many instances whereby gender bias actually colors the experiences of women impact entrepreneurs in making decisions and taking action to expand their businesses.

Gender bias is the unintentional and automatic mental associations based on gender. Shaped by social norms and stereotypes in society, gender bias is often unconscious and results in contexts that favor men over women, including in entrepreneurship¹⁵.

This section dives deeper into how women experience gender bias as a barrier to leverage enablers for their business growth.

14 Investing in Women and YouGov, “Gender Equality Matters 2020: Social Norms, Attitudes and Practices of Urban Millennials in Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam” (Investing in Women, 2020),

15 ILO, “Breaking Barriers: Unconscious Gender Bias in the Workplace,” Report (ILO, 2017), UNICEF South Asia, “Gender Equality: Glossary of Terms and Concepts” (Kathmandu: UNICEF South Asia, 2017), and Behavioural Insights Team and UNDP Regional Innovation, “Paving the Path to Successful Youth Entrepreneurship in the Arab States with Behavioural Science United Nations Development Programme” (New York: UNDP’s Regional Innovation, 2021).

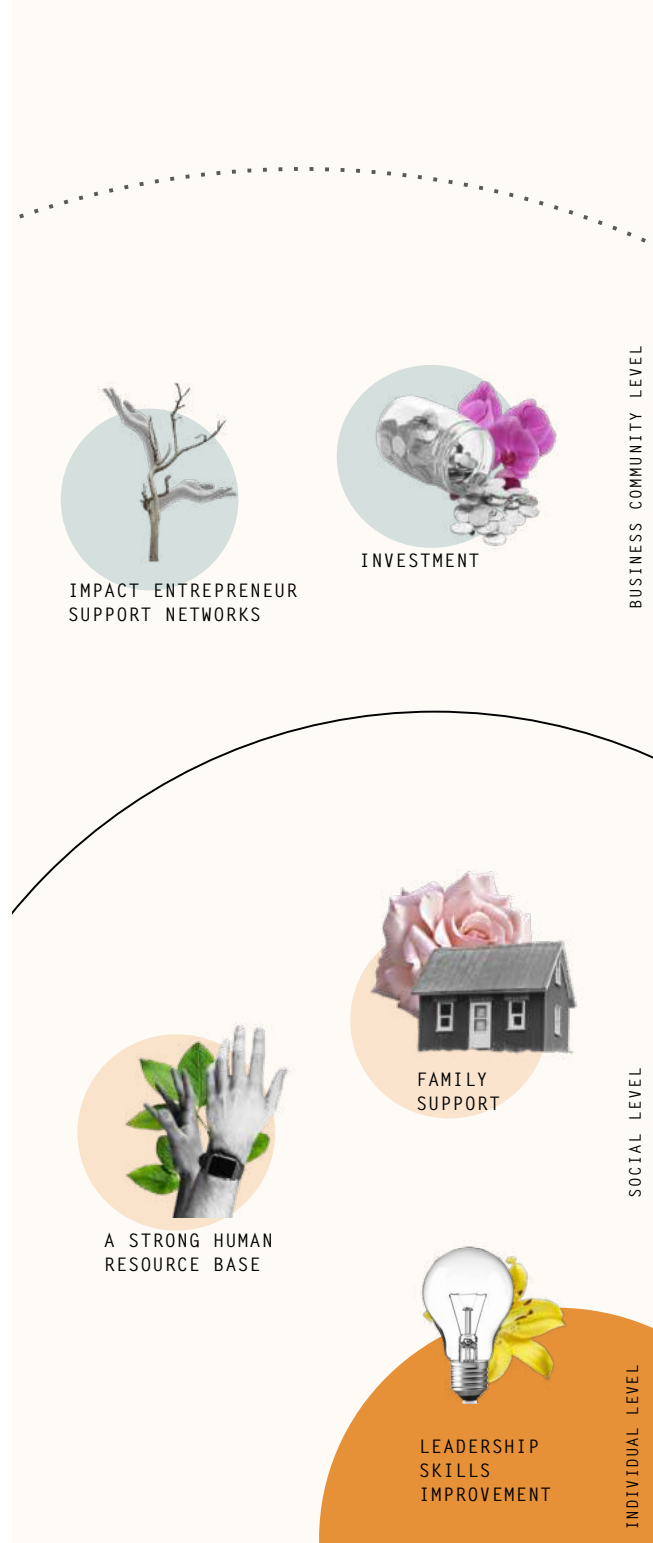


Figure 6. Enablers for Business Growth



INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Leadership skills improvement

- ▶ **Both women and men stress the importance of improving their leadership skills to meet the complex challenges of a scaled-up business, but women express more self-doubt over their leadership skills.**

The women we talked to are accomplished entrepreneurs who have successfully built their businesses beyond the start-up stage, yet fear of failure and self doubt were common underlying themes that emerged throughout our conversations.

When women talk about challenges or threats to their businesses, they tend to self-assign responsibility to anticipate and address the problems, underestimating the role of external factors beyond their control. They also attribute the pitfalls in their entrepreneurship journey to limitations they perceive in their own leadership, which they try to address through continuous self improvements. This is in line with findings from the *2013 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor survey*¹⁶, which indicates that women entrepreneurs demonstrate a higher fear of failure, and diminish such fear if they perceive improvement in their capabilities.

- ▶ **Unlike men, women impact entrepreneurs' time for self-development is constrained by child care responsibilities.**

Women's time poverty due to unpaid care work, including caregiving for family members or house-cleaning, is widely documented. The women impact entrepreneurs in our study have the means to hire care workers, such as nannies or domestic helpers, and most of them do. However, women still spend a substantial amount of time and mental energy to supervise and provide instructions for their care workers, particularly when their children are still below the elementary school age. The women in our study mentioned that they frequently choose to skip industry events and instead resort to online courses that can be taken in late evenings. Yet, they expressed a sense of constant guilt about not spending enough time with their children.

"WHEN THINGS GO SOUTH, I QUESTION WHETHER I AM THE BEST LEADER FOR MY BUSINESS. SOMETIMES I EVEN DOUBT MY CAREER CHOICE."



WOMAN,
SUSTAINABLE FOOD
BUSINESS

"WHEN I GET HOME I USUALLY HAVE TWO HOURS WITH THEM BEFORE THEY GO TO SLEEP. IN THE MORNING WHEN THEY WAKE UP, I AM USUALLY ALREADY ON THE WAY WORK. ALTHOUGH I HAVE NANNIES TO CARE FOR THE KIDS, IT IS STILL EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR ME TO PUT BUSINESS FIRST BEFORE MY KIDS."



WOMAN,
EDU TECH BUSINESS

¹⁶ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, "Strong Perceived Capabilities Lead to Reduced Fear of Failure GEM Global Entrepreneurship Monitor," Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, accessed August 1, 2022,



FAMILY LEVEL

Family support

Family support is “nice-to-have” for men, but is an essential enabler or barrier for women impact entrepreneurs who have young children.

When men discussed the role of family in their entrepreneurship journey, they only mentioned moral or financial support in passing. In contrast, women entrepreneurs define family support in much wider terms, such as their spouse’s willingness to share unpaid care and domestic work, as well as their attitude towards their businesses.

Women shared that their family often perceive their businesses as a secondary source of income, and sometimes question why so much time is spent working when they have young children to take care of. While the women we spoke to described this attitude as an annoyance, it could become a barrier to their business growth if husbands, parents or in-laws are unwilling to share the load of unpaid care and domestic work, thus restricting the amount of time and energy women can allocate to access opportunities to grow their businesses.

“MY HUSBAND IS VERY SUPPORTIVE. HE ENCOURAGED ME TO KEEP GROWING MY BUSINESS WHEN I GAVE BIRTH TO OUR CHILD AND TOOK ON A LOT OF CHILD CARE RESPONSIBILITIES. I KNOW I AM VERY LUCKY.”



WOMAN,
SUSTAINABLE CRAFT
BUSINESS



COMPANY LEVEL

A strong human resource base

Both women and men impact entrepreneurs assume responsibility to develop the skills of their employees and to create an equal work environment, but women go a step further in setting workplace policies to support women employees.

Recruiting new, experienced talents while retaining high-performing employees are key enablers for improving the development and delivery of product or service required for a business to grow. Both men and women impact entrepreneurs discuss the importance of hiring staff members with complementary skill sets, providing competitive compensation, as well as investing in upskilling staff members through training and certification. Every entrepreneur we talked to underlined the importance of creating a work environment that is gender equal.

“WE OBEY THE LAW. WE GIVE EQUAL PAY, WE GIVE MATERNITY LEAVE, AND OUR POLICY DOES NOT HAVE ANY GENDER-RELATED DISCRIMINATORY ASPECT IN THE HIRING PROCESS. I THINK WE’VE DONE ENOUGH.”



MAN,
HEALTH TECH BUSINESS

Men entrepreneurs emphasized that they believe women are just as competent as men. They make sure that their companies never include discriminatory questions during recruitment (such as inquiring about marriage or motherhood plans), and comply with national regulations regarding the provision of maternity, parental and menstrual leave. They also implement remote working and flexible working hours policy, a practice that has proliferated during the COVID-19 pandemic, to cater to working mothers who are pregnant or have young children.

Women entrepreneurs do all the above and more. They explicitly explained that the flexible working hours policy they implemented are meant to allow employees to balance their office and unpaid care work. They discussed the risk of losing high-performing women employees who are entering motherhood, and therefore have attempted to provide more support, such as allowing for extended maternity leave or providing a lactation room in the office. Many of them aspire to offer more support to employees, as long as their businesses have the means to do so.

“AS A WOMAN WHO HAS ALSO EXPERIENCED BABY BLUES SYNDROME, I UNDERSTAND HOW DIFFICULT LIFE CAN BE FOR WOMEN AFTER GIVING BIRTH. THIS IS WHY I AM WILLING TO DOUBLE THE LENGTH OF MY EMPLOYEES’ MATERNITY LEAVE BEYOND WHAT THE GOVERNMENT MANDATES.”



WOMAN,
HOME CARE BUSINESS

▶ Gender dynamics affect women’s dynamics with their leadership team.

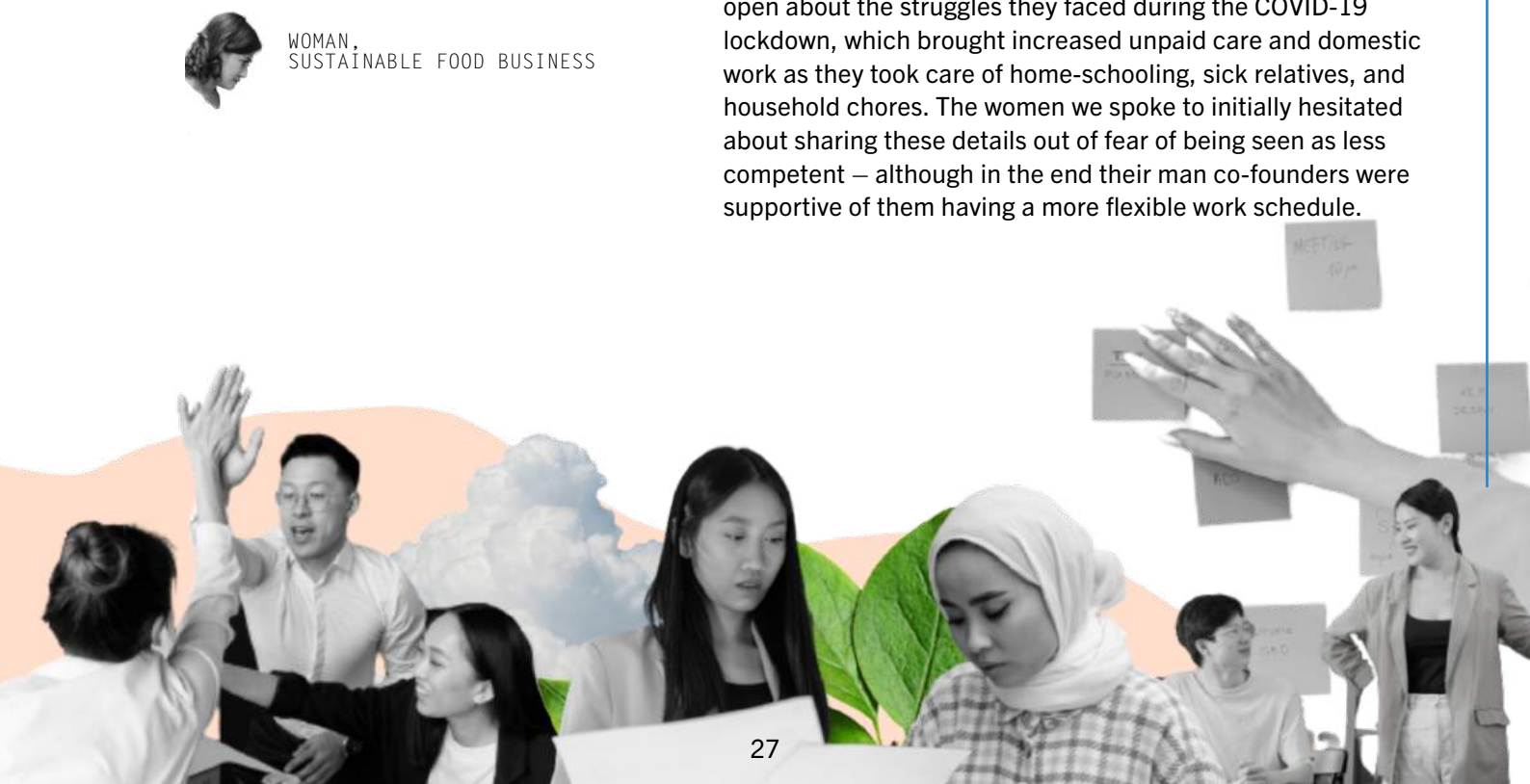
For impact entrepreneurs, a strong human resource base also includes healthy dynamics with co-founders or fellow C-level executives in the company. Both women and men entrepreneurs talked about the importance of having a leadership team that supports each other and fills in skill gaps, as well as learning to have a healthy debate and resolve issues.

However, only the women shared stories about struggling to be heard by their man co-founders during arguments. Women also highlighted that they have grappled with being open about the struggles they faced during the COVID-19 lockdown, which brought increased unpaid care and domestic work as they took care of home-schooling, sick relatives, and household chores. The women we spoke to initially hesitated about sharing these details out of fear of being seen as less competent – although in the end their man co-founders were supportive of them having a more flexible work schedule.

“I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT GIVEN THE CHALLENGES I FACE, I FEEL LIKE WOMEN MUST EMULATE MEN IN ORDER TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.”



WOMAN,
SUSTAINABLE FOOD BUSINESS





BUSINESS COMMUNITY LEVEL

Investments

Investors see pregnancy and motherhood as a risk.

Like men, women impact entrepreneurs find equity investment as the most attractive and feasible source of funding for business scale-up. Government loans come with cumbersome administrative requirements, while bank loans are not seen as an attractive option for women for two reasons: i) not only is the amount relatively small for businesses in the sustaining and scale-up phase, but ii) women are required to have their husband co-sign on the loan application.

Other than investors' bias for aggressive growth models, which we discussed in the previous section, women also reported experiencing gender bias when dealing with investors. We heard stories of women being asked to leave an investor-organized event, because they came with their toddlers and nannies, as well as explicitly being warned not to get pregnant if they want to secure investments. These experiences are indications of some investors' biases against pregnancy and motherhood, seeing them as risks for business growth. In addition, women reported feeling that investors seem to prefer hearing from their man co-founders, echoing the widely documented gender bias in investment pitching rounds¹⁷.

“WHEN A WOMAN FOUNDER BECOMES A MOTHER, HER PRIORITIES WILL BE DIVIDED BETWEEN BUSINESS AND FAMILY. THIS IS A RISK FOR BUSINESS GROWTH.”



INVESTOR



BUSINESS COMMUNITY LEVEL

Impact Entrepreneurs Support Network

Women-only support networks help women entrepreneurs access business opportunities and moral support.

Both women and men highlight that business associations, mentors, and peer-to-peer networking opportunities—what we call support networks in this study—are gateways to information and know-how on raising funds, running a growing business, and finding opportunities for collaboration to expand market reach.

Organizers of these support networks, both from the private sector, as well as government and development partners, acknowledge that not all spaces are friendly to women. In fact, some business associations are notorious for being a “boys club” and that time constraints can hinder women from accessing networking events.



¹⁷ Zafirah Mohamed Zein, “Breaking into the Boys’ Club: The Rise of Women in Tech,” Kontinentalist (blog), 2021.

They respond by creating women-only spaces with a range of offers, such as learning events on business skills, peer-to-peer networking, mentorship matchmaking, and a series of talks on entrepreneurship, ranging from fund-raising strategies to success stories on business growth. To showcase a wide range of women role models, all the speakers, moderators, trainers, mentors, and participants are women. Many support network organizers have also turned to digital forums and provided video reruns of their events to break accessibility barriers, particularly during the pandemic.

The women impact entrepreneurs we talked with gave a mixed response to these initiatives. Some of them pointed out that women-only spaces were helpful when they were still in the early stage of establishing their businesses, providing them a safe space to connect with other women impact entrepreneurs who share the same vision. While these spaces do not tend to offer information, they function as an emotional support system where fellow women entrepreneurs can share stories and experiences about their challenges and learn from each other. This perspective is in line with the experiences of women support network organizers, who confirmed that they spent a lot of time providing one-on-one encouragement to their members.

“SOMETIMES WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS JUST NEED SOMEONE WHO LISTENS. WOMEN DO SO MUCH AT WORK AND AT HOME, AND WE ARE HAPPY TO PROVIDE MORAL SUPPORT TO KEEP THEIR FIRE BURNING.”



BUSINESS
ASSOCIATION

▶ **Despite the rise of women-only spaces, women entrepreneurs still find challenges in finding the right support network for their growth-stage.**

“I SOMETIMES FEEL WOMEN-ONLY COMMUNITIES LIMIT MY LEARNING OPPORTUNITY, BECAUSE THEY TEND TO FOCUS MORE ON GENDER-RELATED EXPERIENCE. I USUALLY LEARN A LOT MORE ABOUT BUSINESS STRATEGY IN A DIVERSE BUSINESS COMMUNITY.”

Women whose businesses are in the sustaining and scale-up phase typically find the discussions and information provided in women-only support networks to be less than relevant for their needs. They expressed the desire to be seen in the same stage and room as their man counterparts, so that they could be seen as real contenders by their peers and prospective investors. From their standpoint, they feel this will not happen unless they break away from women-only spaces.



WOMAN,
E-FISHERY BUSINESS



▶ **While some business associations – especially those that are dominated by men – can be unsupportive to women, women-only spaces can also feel intimidating due to the dominant ‘lean-in’¹⁸ narrative.**

Women-only spaces aim to encourage and support women’s entrepreneurship, therefore events organized in these spaces often center on success stories. These stories not only perpetuate the idea that work-life balance is possible, but also that successful women entrepreneurs can ‘have it all’. Some of the women involved in this study highlighted that they feel out of place at such events, particularly when they are mothers to young children and are struggling to juggle the demands of unpaid care work and running their businesses. As a result, they were often deterred from participating further (which is known as the motherhood penalty)¹⁹.

When we shared this finding with business associations and organizers of women-only spaces, they acknowledged the need to eschew the ‘superwoman’ narrative and organize discussions that better reflect the range of messy, complicated realities of women entrepreneurs who are running a business at a high growth stage. At the same time, they also encourage more women entrepreneurs to take an active role in advocating for the programs and discussions they want to see in networking events.

“THE WOMEN-ONLY NETWORKING EVENTS I’VE BEEN TO KEEP HIGHLIGHTING WOMEN WHO CAN DO IT ALL: RAISE FUNDS, EXPAND TO NEW MARKETS, MENTOR OTHERS, ALL WHILE RAISING A TODDLER. IT’S NOT MY REALITY; I HAD TO MAKE TRADE-OFFS. I DIDN’T FEEL LIKE I GOT THE PEER SUPPORT I NEEDED.”



WOMAN,
ENVIRONMENTAL BUSINESS

“WE SHOULD ALSO NORMALIZE SHARING FAILURE STORIES, NOT ONLY SUCCESS STORIES. WE ALL LEARN FROM MISTAKES, AND WE FEEL LESS ALONE KNOWING THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE IN MAKING MISTAKES.”



BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

OPPORTUNITY AREA

How might we integrate gender-smart approaches in the support network for women impact entrepreneurs?

Gender biases inhibit women impact entrepreneurs from leveraging enablers critical for supporting the growth of their businesses. Various ecosystem enablers are responding through interventions that specifically target women entrepreneurs, but there is a need to improve the programming of these interventions to change the gendered power relations²⁰ within the impact entrepreneur ecosystem.



¹⁸ Lean-in is a business motto popularized by Sheryl Sandberg, who wrote a book with the same title in 2013, encouraging women to assert themselves, project confidence, and grab opportunities to move up in the business world. This idea has since been widely criticized for failing to take into account the realities of women who bear the brunt of unpaid care work, particularly women of color and single mothers.

¹⁹ Motherhood penalty refers to the economic consequences borne by women due to providing care for their family, UN Women, “Redistributing Unpaid Care and Sustaining Quality Care Services: A Prerequisite for Gender Equality” (2016).

²⁰ IDEO.org and Kore Global, “Gender in Design Toolkit: A Guide to Designing Gender Transformative Solutions” (IDEO.org, 2021)

Care work entrepreneurs are demonstrating significant growth potential, but systemic interventions are needed to enable the care sector to scale.

Women bear the brunt of unpaid care work. Over five decades of research underlined that gender inequalities in the distribution of unpaid care work is a root cause of women's economic and social disempowerment (UN Women, 2018)²¹. Our study highlights that this is also the case for successful women impact entrepreneurs. Although they have the means to pay for care services, care responsibilities and child care in particular often become a significant barrier that prevents them from growing their businesses.

Throughout our study, we met with women and men entrepreneurs whose businesses are focused on partly alleviating the burden of unpaid care work. We call them care work entrepreneurs – those who offer quality care services to address specific needs, such as childcare, elderly care, or home-care, while also providing decent employment opportunities for care workers.

The care work entrepreneurs involved in our study are spread across three kinds of services: i) daycare and early learning centers, ii) home-care, as well as iii) senior living facilities. Similar to our interviews with impact entrepreneurs from other sub-sectors, we mapped their entrepreneurial journey and their anticipated growth trajectory. Each of them reported that their businesses have been profitable in the first half of 2022, nearly two and a half years after the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Indonesia. They also shared optimism about future expansion of their businesses over the next five years, despite the challenges they are currently facing in the industry. In this section, we further delve into the experiences of the three types of care enterprises in relation to growing their businesses.

²¹ UN Women, "Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment: Recognizing and Investing in the Care Economy" (New York: UN Women, 2018)



THREE TYPES OF CARE ENTREPRISES:



HOME CARE



DAYCARE &
EARLY LEARNING
CENTERS



SENIOR LIVING
FACILITIES

Three snapshots of care enterprises' growth trajectories



HOME CARE

Rapid growth assisted by digitalization

Home-care enterprises offer professional health and caregiving services at a client's home. The home-care entrepreneurs we met with revealed that their businesses grew rapidly since the start of the pandemic. The prolonged physical distancing measures and consequent mobility restriction brought increased demand for home visits by nurses and caregivers for newborns and the elderly, as well as for at-home blood and COVID-19 tests. However, going digital was the main enabler for the rapid growth of these businesses.

Home-care enterprises function as a matchmaker between clients and care workers. Some of the entrepreneurs in our study do so through websites and call centers, while a few others have adapted their businesses to become full-fledged on-demand digital platforms²². Going digital has not only allowed them to reach more customers and care workers, it also enabled these entrepreneurs to educate the customers and raise awareness on home care services as alternative healthcare. At the same time, it offers new services such as sending ambulances and renting particular health equipment, such as oxygen tanks.

Home-care entrepreneurs are optimistic about their future business growth. In particular, they see that demand will continue to increase, but have acknowledged that the shortage of skilled care workers as the main challenge to overcome. A few of them opted to turn this challenge into a business opportunity: by establishing a training center to nurture future caregivers, which could also broaden the pool of skilled human resources for their companies as well as the overall care industry.

"BY GOING DIGITAL, OUR MONTHLY REVENUE GREW TENFOLD DURING THE PANDEMIC."



WOMAN,
HOME CARE BUSINESS.

²² Digital platforms are online digital businesses that mediate work or services between service providers and customers as shared in ILO, "Issue Brief: No.5 Job Quality in the Platform Economy" (Geneva: ILO, 2018).



DAYCARE AND EARLY LEARNING CENTERS

A quick rebound from the pandemic due to shifting mindsets

Operating for 10 hours per work day, these centers provide care and early learning services for young children, usually upto primary school age. They serve as an alternative to at-home nanny, domestic worker or grandparents in providing care to young children of working parents.

All the daycare entrepreneurs in our study had to close their centers for more than one year during the pandemic. The sharp loss of income negatively impacted their businesses, but the situation also pushed them to diversify their offers in order to stay afloat. Some of them focused on home educare by sending early childhood educators to clients' homes, a few pivoted to catering services to provide nutritious complementary foods for young children, while others upskill domestic workers and at-home nanny with early childhood education training.

“PARENTS ARE INCREASINGLY PRIORITIZING QUALITY CHILD CARE AND ARE WILLING TO PAY FOR IT. RATHER THAN HAVING THEIR DOMESTIC HELPER OR FAMILY MEMBERS TAKE CARE OF THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN AT HOME, THEY WOULD RATHER SEND THEM TO OUR DAYCARE. WE OFFER NUTRITIOUS FOOD AND OUR CAREGIVERS ARE TRAINED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. THEIR CHILDREN CAN MAKE FRIENDS, AND PARENTS CAN MONITOR OUR ACTIVITIES REMOTELY.”



WOMAN,
DAY CARE BUSINESS

Once they could reopen, the businesses recovered quickly. All of the daycare entrepreneurs we talked to expressed that their businesses are currently back to being profitable. Not only are they back to operating at full capacity, but daycare entrepreneurs also noted that they have had long waiting lists and had to refuse new clients (focusing on maintaining the quality of their services rather than just increasing the quantity of clients). They attribute this quick rebound due to the shifting mindsets among urban, upper-middle class parents, particularly mothers.

Daycare entrepreneurs anticipate further growth in their businesses over the next five years. They shared plans geared towards expanding the new services that they started during the pandemic or launching new offerings, such as partnering with major companies to provide employer-supported childcare, organizing weekend clubs for children, and branching out to add child psychology services.



SENIOR LIVING FACILITIES

A budding service to meet future demands

As stated by the senior living entrepreneurs we met through this study, the elderly population in Indonesia continues to increase, and is estimated to reach 74 million or around 25% of the total population by 2050²³. The majority of the elderly are taken care of at home by their family members. There are nursing home facilities provided by both the government and the private sector, but most of them cater to the low-income segment and there is a strong stigma against sending elderly family members off to live by themselves.

²³ UNFPA, “Monograph Series No. 1: Indonesia on the Threshold of Population Ageing” (Jakarta: UNFPA, 2017)

Senior living facilities offer an alternative: a housing complex designed for adults over the retirement age, which offers integrated health and domestic care services. These facilities cater both to active older adults and those who require assisted living. They provide not only convenience, but also opportunities for socializing with peers that can help address the stress associated with isolation that is often experienced by the elderly.

Senior living entrepreneurs admitted that at this time these facilities are offered at premium prices, but hope that they can offer services that cater to different levels of income as the care sector grows more mature.

“SENIOR LIVING FACILITIES ARE RARE IN INDONESIA, BUT IT IS MUSHROOMING IN MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE. OUR POPULATION IS AGING, I FORESEE A HIGH DEMAND FOR THIS SERVICE IN THE FUTURE.”



MAN,
SENIOR LIVING
BUSINESS.

A common set of challenges in Indonesia’s nascent care industry

While the care work entrepreneurs in our study may be operating three different businesses, they all share a similar set of challenges that may impede their future business growth.

As already mentioned in the previous section, **the shortage of skilled care workers** is the main constraint identified by all the care work entrepreneurs we talked to. They currently work with vocational schools to recruit care workers. Some have started their own training programs, but they still see this being an issue in the future, especially as the care industry grows. At the heart of the problem, paid care work is not yet seen as a desirable profession due to low wages and the prevailing perception that it is a low-skilled profession.

Although demand for the care industry is rising, it comes with a high expectation for excellence. The care industry grows as the mindsets and norms around caregiving shifts, as shared in the previous section. However, at this point in time, customers are expecting a constant high level of quality service and perfection. Care work entrepreneurs shared that customers have zero tolerance for perceived mistakes, particularly for child and home-based care services, and this could have negative consequences on the reputation of their businesses.

Investors perceive the care sector as unattractive. With the exception of platform-based home-care, care work entrepreneurs shared that investors tend to think that their businesses are unlikely to grow and will yield low returns. Some are responding by figuring out how to leverage digital technologies further into their business model, while others are content with their profitable business models and prefer to find funding from sources other than equity investments.

Finally, the care work entrepreneurs involved in our study acknowledged that their businesses are **not affordable for those who need them the most.** Serving the upper-middle class is the most viable option for their business in the current state of the care industry. All of them aspire to extend their services to the middle and lower income segments in the future, but describe it as more of a long-term dream than a concrete plan in their anticipated growth trajectory.



A call to strengthen the foundation of Indonesia's care economy



Care work entrepreneurs are part of the broader care economy: “the paid and unpaid care work provided by people as part of human survival, welfare, and reproducing the labor force—a cornerstone of all human development” (UNESCAP, 2022⁴). This entails the use of time, energy, goods, and services essential for the well-being of care-dependent groups, such as children, the elderly, the ill and people with disabilities, as well as working-age adults (UN Women, 2018²⁵).

The worth of the global care economy is estimated at a staggering USD648 billion²⁶, with the World Economic Forum projecting that almost 40 per cent of all new work opportunities between 2020 and 2023 will be created in the care sector²⁷. As a qualitative study with a small sample, it is not feasible for us to project the experiences of care work entrepreneurs to the broader care industry in Indonesia, but they do signal broader issues around the country's care economy.

All of the challenges experienced by care work entrepreneurs above are systemic. A shortage of skilled care workers is rooted in the social norm around caregiving work, which is still commonly performed without pay and therefore not seen as desirable, prospective work²⁸. Indonesia does not have comprehensive data to estimate the supply and demand for care services²⁹. Without such data, signals identified through qualitative research will continue to be viewed as anecdotal and not enough to instigate action. Unless the foundation of Indonesia's care economy is strengthened, the future care industry will continue to cater only to the upper-middle class.

When we shared this finding with ecosystem enablers during triangulation interviews, investors and organizers of support networks gave a lukewarm response. They did not dismiss unpaid care work as a barrier for women's economic empowerment, but also did not prioritize it as an issue to raise or engage with in their activities to support women impact entrepreneurs. Investors expressed doubts about investing in the care sector, saying that there is little evidence on how to measure and project investment returns. Nonetheless, representatives of business associations and incubators stated that the care economy is starting to emerge as a topic in large forums on impact investing, including in the range of G20 Summit side events organized across Indonesia during the first half of 2022. Still, the general consensus is that it is not a profitable sector and engaging in the care economy leans heavier towards philanthropy.

24 UNESCAP, “How to Invest in the Care Economy: A Primer” (Bangkok: UNESCAP, 2022).

25 UN Women, “Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment.”

26 Pivotal Ventures, “648 Billion Reasons Why the Care Economy Is Serious Business,” Pivotal Ventures, accessed August 1, 2022.

27 World Economic Forum, “Jobs of Tomorrow: Mapping Opportunity in the New Economy” (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2020).

28 Atnike Sigiro, “Care Economy and the Burden of Housewives' Work in Indonesia,” *Jurnal Perempuan* 23 (2018): 24.

29 SMERU Research Institute, “Study on Unpaid Care Work in Indonesia” (Jakarta: SMERU Research Institute, 2016).



“INVESTING IN THE CARE ECONOMY IS ABSOLUTELY CRUCIAL TO ADVANCE WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT. WE’RE TAKING THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED BY INDONESIA’S G20 PRESIDENCY TO MOBILIZE THE COLLECTIVE EFFORT REQUIRED TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE.”

GOVERNMENT
REPRESENTATIVE

On the other hand, representatives from the government and development sectors expressed excitement about this finding. The COVID-19 pandemic has once again brought unequal distribution of unpaid care work into policy discussions³⁰. The issue requires a wide range of policy support — for instance to address social protection, infrastructure, data and labor policies, among others— rather than a single instrument. They described many initiatives that have been undertaken in recent years to increase attention on strengthening Indonesia’s care economy, ranging from experiments in valuation of the care economy and issuing guidelines for quality provision of care services to convening seminars as part of awareness raising efforts. Yet, although the topic is back in policy discussions, prevailing gender bias and norms about women’s role as primary caregiver still stand in the way, preventing various actors from moving towards concrete action.

OPPORTUNITY AREA

How might we leverage these signals to strengthen Indonesia’s care economy to meet future needs?

Redistributing unpaid care work is essential for women’s economic empowerment. Our study identified promising signals of change from care work entrepreneurs, and increased attention to the care economy in policy discussions. However, unless wider systemic interventions are carried out, care services will continue to primarily serve the upper-middle class instead of people who need them the most.



³⁰ UN Women and Pulse Lab Jakarta, “Leveraging Digitalization to Cope with COVID-19: An Indonesia Case Study on Women-Owned Micro and Small Businesses (Bangkok: UN Women, 2020).



CHAPTER 03

Opportunity Areas



The findings of our study demonstrate that women impact entrepreneurs experience gender-related barriers to leveraging enablers that are critical for growing their businesses. Barriers described in the previous sections are often intangible, emerging in the form of gender biases. However, they have adverse consequences on how women entrepreneurs develop their skills; shoulder additional mental load and unpaid care work; access funding; and benefit from support networks that are intended to support their business growth. Breaking these barriers is not only essential to ensure women can thrive as entrepreneurs but also as individuals.

This section presents a set of opportunities for action, which leverages existing interventions generated by the ecosystem enablers to support women impact entrepreneurs in Indonesia. We expand on the opportunity areas identified throughout our research, by featuring real-life examples from around the world that serve as inspiration for further action.

In developing these recommendations, we aim for a mix of gender-smart and gender transformative solutions³¹. Gender-smart interventions acknowledge the gender biases and norms faced by women in its programming decisions, while gender transformative principles go a step further to reconstruct the underlying norms and systems that drive gender inequity. While gender transformative solutions serve as our north star, we acknowledge that gender-smart strategies are often more achievable in the timeframe, scope, budget and capacity of ecosystem enablers, and can influence social dynamics towards a more gender-transformative direction over time.



OPPORTUNITY AREA 1

Diversify financing options to accommodate a wider range of growth trajectories

DEMISTIFY GENDER LENS INVESTING (GLI)

OFFER BLENDED FINANCE OPTIONS



OPPORTUNITY AREA 2

Foster gender-smart support networks

PROMOTE RESILIENT LEADERSHIP AS EXEMPLAR OF SUCCESS

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR GENDER-SMART PROGRAMMING



OPPORTUNITY AREA 3

Mobilize action towards a future-fit care economy

COLLECT AND SHARE DATA ON THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF CARE SERVICES

PROMOTE POSITIVE NORM OF MEN'S ROLE AS CAREGIVERS

ESTABLISH PAID CARE WORK AS A RESPECTED PROFESSION

ENCOURAGE AND INCENTIVIZE EMPLOYER-SUPPORTED CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK PACKAGES

STRENGTHEN THE BUSINESS CASE FOR INVESTMENT INTO THE CARE SECTOR

31 IDEO.org and Kore Global, "Gender in Design Toolkit: A Guide to Designing Gender Transformative Solutions".

OPPORTUNITY AREA 1

Diversify financing options to accommodate a wider range of growth trajectories

Impact enterprises have a wide range of growth trajectories, but investors tend to be biased towards an aggressive growth model. This is a barrier for women impact entrepreneurs who prefer a staged, sustainable approach to growth. To change this dynamic, we recommend two areas for action.



Demistify Gender Lens Investing (GLI)

As previously highlighted in our report, GLI is a promising intervention that can close the funding gap for women impact entrepreneurs. Despite the growing body of evidence, misperceptions around the practice and profitability of GLI remains a barrier for its wider adoption by investors and entrepreneurs alike. Efforts to demystify GLI can be achieved through various strategies:

- strategic convening of multiple stakeholders—from investors and entrepreneurs, to government actors—that make use of available evidence and showcase real-life GLI investment experiences; and
- equipping more impact investors with practical knowledge on the application of GLI tools that are the best fit for their operating context.



Gender Lens Investment Showcase

In June 2021, *Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN)*, a pan-Asian support network for impact entrepreneurs, organized an online GLI investment showcase with the AmCham and AusCham in Vietnam. The event featured pairs of GLI investors, as well as women entrepreneurs they invested in. It involved sharing real-life experiences on how they connected, the process of fund-raising, as well as ongoing dynamics and growth progress after the funds are received.



Gender Lens Investing Fellowship


The Fellowship, organized by AVPN, aims to provide practical know-how on the application of GLI for asset owners and wealth managers in the Asia-Pacific. Selected competitively, the GLI fellows are expected to bring their knowledge back to their organizations and become part of the wider GLI champions in the region.



Offer Blended Finance Options

An alternative to the venture capital model, blended finance is a multi-stakeholder financing approach that uses capital from public or philanthropic funds to attract private sector investment by lowering the risk, demonstrating the validity of new markets, and creating incentives for investments. Blended finance as a public-private partnership works through three mechanisms: i) guarantees, ii) first-loss pools of capital in structured funds, and iii) donor-funded technical assistance facilities, grant supported equity, or other forms of capital matching.

INSPIRATION




CASE STUDY
WOMEN'S LIVELIHOOD BOND (WLB)
 FEBRUARY 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Impact Investment Exchange's (IIX) Women's Livelihood Bond (WLB) is an innovative development finance instrument that mobilizes private sector capital for development impact by pooling loans to social enterprises into a public debt security. The USD 8M, four-year bond is listed on the Singapore Exchange (SGX) and will pay a semi-annual coupon to bondholders. The bond proceeds were lent to three underlying borrowers focused on empowering women through sustainable livelihoods in Southeast Asia. The WLB benefits from a blended capital structure, mitigating risk through a USD 500K first-loss tranche and a pari passu guarantee of 50% of the loan principal.

Launched in 2017, IIX spent approximately two years designing, structuring, listing and fundraising for the WLB. During this time, the size and structure evolved significantly, adapting to and managing important challenges around innovation, including right-sizing the risk mitigation mechanisms, and investor outreach and education. The WLB uses existing capital markets instrument to achieve impact in an innovative way and is a key development for impact investing in Asia.

The WLB's design and fundraising experience present useful insights for others considering structuring or investing in similar structures:

- Gender-lens investing is an emerging trend
- Multiple layers of concessional capital may be required
- Blended finance structures are complex
- Knowledge of target investors is important for positioning attractive investment opportunities
- Blended finance or not, innovation is costly

SYNOPSIS

Portfolio manager: Impact Investment Exchange (IIX)

Mandate: Empowering 385K women through sustainable livelihoods, building their resilience to socio-economic shocks and stresses in Cambodia, Vietnam, and the Philippines through enhanced access to credit, market linkages, and affordable goods and services.

Issue date: 2017

Bond tenor: 4 years

Size: USD 8M

Key stakeholders: United States Agency for International Development (USAID); Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT); Japan Research Institute; Rockefeller Foundation

Capital structure: Senior debt: USD 8M
 First-loss capital: USD 500K
 Partial guarantee: 50% of losses on underlying loans

Investment instruments: Senior unsecured debt in US dollars

Investment size: USD 1.0-3.7M

Investees: MFI; SAMIC PLC; NWT
 Social enterprise: Viet Phu Payment Services (iCare)

Target return: Senior debt: 5.65% coupon rate

Example impact metrics: Social return on investment (SROI), total female beneficiaries

Women's Livelihood Bonds (WLB)

Launched in 2018 by the *Impact Investment Exchange (IIX)*, WLB is the world's first listed gender lens impact bond. The USD 8 million, four-year bond is listed on the Singapore Exchange (SGX) and pays a semi-annual coupon for bondholders, while proceeds were lent to women impact entrepreneurs in Southeast Asia. The bond was designed by involving multiple stakeholders—USAID, Rockefeller Foundation, DBS Bank, ANZ bank, and Japan Research Institute—from the design, fundraising and competitive selection of borrowers, to issuing the bond.



OPPORTUNITY AREA 2

Foster gender-smart support networks

Those who organize support networks for women impact entrepreneurs are responding to gender biases in their ecosystem by organizing women-only spaces. While this reduces women’s access constraints to networking, mentorship and training opportunities, our study identifies the need to go a few steps further into gender-smart programming, interventions that carefully consider gendered power dynamics and proactively address women’s specific needs³².



Promote resilient leadership as exemplar of success

Support networks for women impact entrepreneurs aim to spotlight women as role models, but in doing so inadvertently perpetuates the ‘superwoman’ narrative—those who can lean in and do it all, leading their businesses to high growth against all odds while smoothly dealing with their responsibilities as mothers. This narrative can be alienating to women entrepreneurs whose realities are far more complex, particularly women with young children. Instead, we recommend promoting resilient leadership as the model for success. This means highlighting women’s stories of moving through growth challenges at a pace that works for them, and demonstrating how they access resources to support themselves through rough patches in their entrepreneurial journey.



WomenLead by Magdalene.co

An online portal that aims to change perceptions about women leaders and women’s role at the workplace in Indonesia, run by the online media Magdalene.co. What is unique about this portal is the emphasis on ‘untold stories’—the challenges, failures and biases faced by women leaders, including the motherhood penalty—in their podcasts and articles. These are different from the typical aspirational narratives.



INC. Female Founders 100 – The Most Inspiring Women of the Year

Unlike most entrepreneurs-of-the-year lists that are based on explosive valuation or cutting-edge products, this award also celebrates women leaders who lift other women through their businesses, triumph over adversity, and contribute to addressing wider systemic issues underlying gender inequality, such as advocating for more affordable child care services for working mothers.

INSPIRATION

32 IDEO.org and Kore Global, “Gender in Design Toolkit: A Guide to Designing Gender Transformative Solutions”.

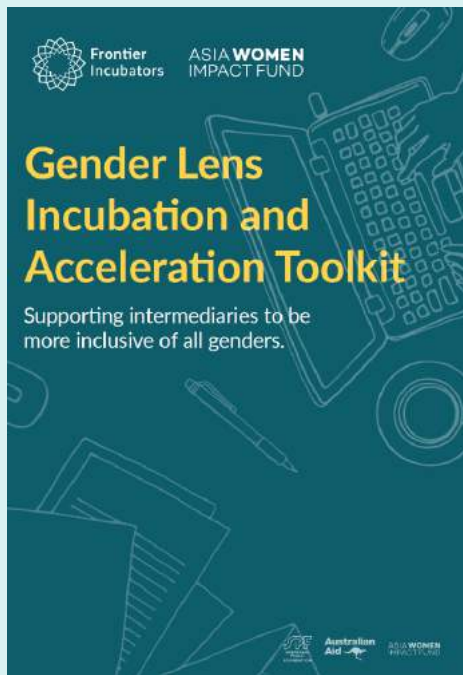


Design guidelines for gender-smart programming

Practical guidelines to integrate gender-smart principles in program design can be useful for both organizers of women-only spaces and broader support networks. The latter is especially important to accommodate women entrepreneurs at a later growth stage, who aspire to be seen as equals to their man counterparts. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, features of gender smart program design guidelines could include:

- Assessment tools to identify gender barriers within their networks, including norms;
- Practical principles that can be applied to balance gendered power dynamic, such as adopting a no all-male panel policy for events and establishing a code of conduct as a way to engage men in promoting a positive group norm in support of gender equality; and
- Highlighting both women and men who are champions of gender-inclusive cultures and practices within their businesses during industry events.

INSPIRATION



The Gender Lens Incubation and Acceleration Toolkit (GLIA)

Published in 2020 by *Frontiers Incubators* and *Asia Women's Impact Fund*, GLIA Toolkit is a guideline for incubators, accelerators, and other entrepreneurial support organizations operating in Southeast Asian contexts. The toolkit uses an ecosystemic lens and explicitly discusses power imbalances inherent in network events, like pitching sessions or mentorship, and provides concrete steps that organizations can take to identify and address these issues throughout the design and delivery of their programs.



OPPORTUNITY AREA 3

Mobilize action towards a future-fit care economy

At first blush, strengthening the foundation of Indonesia's care economy may not seem to be a direct response to questions around supporting the business growth of women impact entrepreneurs. Our research has demonstrated how unpaid care work becomes a barrier for women's economic empowerment, as well as the high likelihood of increased demands for care work in the future. Addressing this issue does not only benefit women impact entrepreneurs, it will also boost the economic empowerment of women across different income levels and improve the well-being of everyone.



Amongst our recommendations, this opportunity area is the most gender-transformative – directly addressing norms and social systems that underlie a problem³³. Gender transformative solutions are challenging—it works in the long term, often taking a multigenerational perspective and involves multiple actors in the ecosystem. Several policy papers³⁴ have outlined comprehensive recommendations to invest in the care economy, and we complement them by providing five specific starting points based on our research:



Collect and share data on the supply and demand of care services

There are currently no datasets available that estimate the supply and demand of care services in Indonesia, which is crucial to serve as evidence to design and allocate resources for care policies. Such datasets will also be useful to encourage investments into the care sector. The government, particularly through the National Statistics Agency, is best placed to address this gap, but the private sector and academia also have a role as collaborators.

INSPIRATION

Buenos Aires' Care Indicator System

The Statistics Bureau of Buenos Aires in Argentina partnered with the *Open Data Charter* to build a *Care Indicator System (CIS)* to show how care supply and demand are distributed in the city. The data system is organized to display data around contextual indicators of the number of people in need of care services in Buenos Aires and the supply of care from the government, households, community and market. Once analyzed, the data will be made available to the public.

Bogota's Care District System

The local government of Bogota in Colombia collects data of care programs and services provided by a wide range of actors to meet care demands. The district-based system connects local government to the national government, private sector, communities and households, while providing a snapshot of the supply and demand for care services.

33 IDEO.org and Kore Global, "Gender in Design Toolkit: A Guide to Designing Gender Transformative Solutions" (IDEO.org, 2021)
34 For example UN Women, "Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment."



Establish paid care work as a respected profession

Despite their crucial role in either providing care services in home or institutional settings, care workers' basic rights have largely been overlooked and their work has been undervalued. A large portion of the care workers population has to face gender segregation and segmentation, poor working conditions and benefits including no paid sick leave with little or no social protection, precarious contracts, low remuneration, gender pay gaps, and an increased risk of violence and harassment (ILO, 2022). While training and certification programs contribute to the professionalization of care work, civil society organizations or care work associations have pivotal roles in advocating for decent working conditions and basic rights for care workers.

INSPIRATION



U.K.'s National Association of Care and Support Workers (NACAS)

The National Association of Care and Support Workers (NACAS) has been known as a leading movement to improve the working conditions of care workers, led by the care workers themselves. Their advocacy efforts work through building a coalition that demands policy makers and politicians to improve the working conditions of care workers, such as through investment in care workers' training and development, as well as better social benefits. The movement commissions research to look at the societal perceptions on care work and use it as a basis for online campaigns to change negative perceptions (NESTA, 2022).

Strengthen the business case for investment into the care sector

Our study signals that care work entrepreneurs in Indonesia are demonstrating significant growth potentials even during the COVID-19, particularly those in urban areas. With investments, this budding industry can partly offer solutions to meet care demands that will continue to grow in the future, but the business case needs to be strengthened to attract investment into this sector.

INSPIRATION

Investor's Guide to the Care Economy

The Holding Co and Pivotal Ventures published a study that estimates the size and valuation of the overall care market, showcasing how promising the industry is for investment. It zooms in on four areas of care services, including but not limited to infant and child care, elderly care, household management, and care for people with disabilities. In each service, it details the care economy-related activities, market size, and the spending. This guide is the first study that looks deeper into the care sector, a new initiative to inform and attract investment to tap into the untapped market.

The Care Economy Knowledge Hub

A research project led by *Kore Global* along with a consortium of five partners was conducted to support the market-based solutions in order to fill the information gap in the care economy. It focused on generating evidence on the financial viability and social and environmental benefits of businesses in the industry to help impact investors make strategic and data-driven decisions on their investments in the Global South.



Promote positive norm of men's role as caregivers

Redistributing unpaid care work does not only mean outsourcing the work to care workers, it also requires men to share the load. Targeted, long term campaigns to promote a positive norm on men's role in caregiving can help men to further adapt to this role.

INSPIRATION

A Designer's Toolkit for Gender and Urban Millennials in Indonesia

Published by YouGov and the Investing in Women initiative, this designer toolkit is based on a Social Norms, Attitudes and Practices (SNAP) 2020 Survey conducted with 2000 urban millennial women and men in Indonesia. The toolkit provides detailed attitudes, social expectations and behaviors of key segments of urban millennials, which can serve as a basis to develop specific, targeted campaigns to shift gender norms.

Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru

Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru (New Men's Alliance) is an Indonesian coalition for men to transform masculinity for gender justice. Since 2009, it has run campaigns and advocacy to promote equal roles between men and women, including in sharing unpaid care and domestic work.



Encourage and incentivize employer-supported care and domestic work packages

The women and men impact entrepreneurs in our study implement remote and flexible working hours as part of their workplace policies, in addition to following provisions for maternity and menstrual leave as mandated by Indonesian law. Many of them aspire to offer more support, but perceive any other effort to be costly. Ecosystem enablers, including investors, can spearhead efforts to encourage and incentivize employer-supported care by building a consensus to integrate a care lens as part of the criteria to inform capital mobilization efforts.

INSPIRATION

Including a care criteria into gender lens investing or ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) investment

Gender Smart and 2X Collaborative's Care Economy Working Group is advocating for the integration of care in making investment decisions, such as through widening the commonly used 'quality of employment' criteria to include aspects related with care.

Advocating for a spectrum of employer-supported care and domestic work

Comprehensive guidelines and best practices on this topic could feel intimidating for entrepreneurs. The alternative is to present a wide spectrum of options for employer-supported care and domestic work, which can incrementally be adopted as appropriate to the growth stage of the company.

Moving Forward: Towards a long-term systemic transformation

The **Breaking Growth Barriers for Women Impact Entrepreneurs** in Indonesia study sheds light on a myriad of systemic factors preventing women from growing their businesses. Our study highlights the entrepreneurship journey and anticipated growth trajectory of women and men entrepreneurs. This further allows us to decipher the interplay between systemic challenges and gender biases affecting the mental models of ecosystem enablers, men and women entrepreneurs, which perpetuate the gender gap in the growth of small and medium enterprises in Indonesia.

Our findings show that both women and men are equally ambitious and risk taking entrepreneurs, but the primary difference is in their approach. However, existing gender biases tend to come in their way, thereby preventing them from accessing ecosystem enablers to grow their businesses. This is particularly true for women who are pregnant or have young children, as they often undertake more unpaid care work during this period. In response to this phenomenon, our study highlighted how care work enterprises offer not only a high growth potential for the industry, but also a solution to redistribute unpaid care work.

We present potential high-impact opportunity areas as options, which can be a springboard for further exploration and implementation of future gender transformative programming. As emphasized throughout this report, breaking gender-related barriers to the growth of women impact enterprises require a systemic approach. Indeed, systemic changes will have a long-term impact, but it may need a strong commitment, budget, capacity and scope of all involving stakeholders, such as the government, investors, organizers of support networks, researchers and academia, civil society organizations, as well as development partners. With a concerted effort from different stakeholders, we can transform into a society that provides equitable economic empowerment for all.





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Glossary

Angel investor

Angel investors invest their personal money into early-stage companies in exchange for a share in the enterprise. They can invest on their own or in groups with other investors.

Blended finance

A multi-stakeholder financing strategy that uses capital from public or philanthropic funds to attract private sector investment by lowering risk, demonstrating the viability of new markets, and creating incentives for investments.

Bootstrapping

The act of starting and funding a business without external capital, while relying on only the founder's resources. The business grows by reinvesting profits in its expansion.

C-level

A company's executive level or upper management is referred to as "C-level," where "C" stands for "chief", such as chief executive officer (CEO).

Care work entrepreneurs

Care work entrepreneurs are part of the broader care economy: "the paid and unpaid care work provided by people as part of human survival, welfare, and reproducing the labor force—a cornerstone of all human development". This entails the use of time, energy, goods and services essential for the well-being of care-dependent groups, such as children, the elderly, the ill and people with disabilities, as well as working-age adults.

Ecosystem enablers

A group of actors working to support the growth and economic empowerment of entrepreneurs, ranging from investors, business associations, mentors and development programs, to government representatives

Gender bias

The unintentional and automatic mental associations based on gender that are shaped by social norms and stereotypes in society. Gender bias is often unconscious and results in contexts that favor men over women.

Gender equality

Women and men having equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities that take into account the interests, needs and priorities of both men and women, while also acknowledging the diversity of different groups of women and men.

Gender gap

This may be described as disparity in the social status or position of men and women.

Gender lens investing

The deliberate approach of incorporating gender considerations into investment analysis and decisions, which are intended to generate financial returns and positive impact on women, girls and gender equality

Gender norms

Ideas about how men and women should be and act, which set up a life-cycle of gender socialization and stereotyping.

Gender smart interventions

Interventions that acknowledge the gender biases and norms faced by women in its programming decisions and seek to proactively address the inequity women face.

Gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are simplistic generalizations about the gender attributes, differences and roles of women and men.

Gender transformative

Gender transformative principles reconstruct the underlying norms and systems that drive gender inequity.

Growth-oriented entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs with the desire and ability to expand their businesses, as well as motivation to start a business based on their ambitions

Impact entrepreneurship

Those whose businesses are not only focusing on generating profit to grow, but also contribute to improving social and environmental impact. These businesses often focus on sectors that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, such as health, care, or agriculture sectors.

Impact investment

An investment in companies, organizations and funds with the goal of generating measurable social and environmental impact in addition to financial return.

Lean-in narrative

Lean-in is a business motto popularized by Sheryl Sandberg, who wrote a book with the same title in 2013, encouraging women to assert themselves, project confidence, and grab opportunities to move up in the business world. This idea has since been widely criticized for failing to take into account the realities of women who bear the brunt of unpaid care work, particularly women of color and single mothers.

Mental model

The unconscious, underlying worldviews that can promote or hinder change by facilitating or limiting how different people see the world.

Motherhood penalty

Economic consequences (e.g time loss to pitch business opportunities) borne by women as a result of providing care work to their family.

Private equity

A broad category of non-publicly traded investments, which include angel investing and venture capital, as well as other forms such as leveraged buyouts.

Impact entrepreneurs support network

Business associations, mentors and peer-to-peer networking opportunities that provide access to information and know-how on raising funds, running a growing business, and collaboration opportunities to expand market reach.

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are a 15-year global call to action to end poverty, protect the environment, and improve people's lives and prospects everywhere.

Systemic design

A qualitative methodology that combines the processes to investigate and analyze social systems with strategies to design and intervene in such systems. Systemic design is informed both by human-centered design competencies and system thinking skills that shape human behavior which seeks to uncover the intangible dynamics and underlying mental models that are shaping behaviors and social phenomena.

Tech-enabled enterprises

These are enterprises that use digital technologies as an integral part of their business model as a proxy to determine growth orientation and potential.

Time Poverty

Working long hours and having no choice to do otherwise. An individual is time poor if he or she works long hours and is also monetary poor, or would fall into monetary poverty if his or her working hours were reduced below a given time poverty line.

Unpaid care work

A significant portion of care and domestic work is performed on an unpaid basis through relationships of family, kinship and friendship. Although unpaid care and domestic work is not counted as 'economic activity' in labor-force surveys or GDP calculations, it has enormous economic value: it contributes to human well-being, strengthens social ties, and enables economic dynamism and growth.

Venture capital

A type of private equity investment that is typically focused on high-risk, high-return investments.

Women economic empowerment

The ability to succeed and advance economically as well as to make and act on economic decisions.

Women entrepreneurs

Women who are majority shareholders (owning (51 percent of a business and/or owning a business license and/or gender position on the board of directors (>30 percent are women) and/or recognition from the person responsible for running the business owners that the owner of the business is a woman



Appendix: Methodological Note

Employing systemic design to understand the enablers and barriers impacting the growth of women impact entrepreneurs' businesses

The intangible dynamics between systemic barriers and gender biases adversely affect the growth of women impact entrepreneurs' businesses. Our study intends to shed light on the interplay between these barriers, and provide high-impact opportunity areas for a long-term systemic transformation and equitable economic empowerment. Acknowledging the complexity of identifying and intervening in norms, we opted for the use of systemic design as our main methodology.

Systemic design is a qualitative methodology that allows researchers or social innovation practitioners to investigate and analyze sociotechnical systems, along with strategies to design and intervene in the broader systems. In short, it constitutes the following principles (Bijl-Brouwer and Malcolm, 2020):

- Opening up and acknowledging the interconnectedness of problems to access new pathways for solutions;
- Developing empathy with the system by acknowledging and investigating the diverse perspectives of system actors and uncovering the tensions;
- Strengthening human relationships to drive learning and creativity through designing conditions, infrastructures, or enabling platforms;
- Influencing mental models as the most potential leverage points to enable change; and
- Adopting an evolutionary design approach in which testing and iteration are applied not only to the prototypes, but also the corresponding problem framing.

These principles were further translated throughout our study, from developing research tools to coming up with recommendations. In this appendix, we describe the steps we undertook in turn.

Training and preparing research team

As part of our collective effort to address the systemic barriers which women impact entrepreneurs face, it was essential for the research team to enhance their ability to discern intangible dynamics and underlying mental models of the study participants, especially when conducting interviews. Despite the extensive experience of researchers in conducting studies on women's economic empowerment and systemic design, we consciously sought to continuously reinforce our comprehension of the methodology. Therefore, at the beginning of our research, we organized a dedicated internal workshop to make sure we all had a mutual understanding of the methodology and how we would translate the principles into our research tools, contexts, as well as other aspects to consider when speaking with the study participants. We also consulted UN Women's program team, who has domain expertise in women impact entrepreneurship, to help solidify our foundational knowledge on the topic.

Through testing our research tools, we better prepared and trained ourselves to employ appropriate interview techniques. We made sure that for every question addressed to the study participants, the emphasis was on the whys to shed more light on their reasons behind each decision made to grow their businesses. In addition, we participated in various public forums and focus group discussions (FGDs) to observe emerging practices from ecosystem enablers in order to support the growth of women impact enterprises, and other areas that were relevant for our study. As part of our study, we also conducted desk reviews to keep us informed of evolving contexts and practices. Desk review was particularly pivotal when we looked further into signals of change to identify intervention areas that we could leverage in the recommendations.

Developing interview instruments

Our data collection process comprised two sets of interviews: i) in-depth interviews with impact entrepreneurs, and ii) triangulation interviews with ecosystem enablers. Both sets of interviews served different purposes.

By conducting in-depth interviews with impact entrepreneurs, we aimed to understand the following three areas:

1. How women small and medium impact entrepreneurs view and make decisions on their business growth;
2. The systemic enablers and barriers they face at the individual, social, community and societal levels which influence their decisions; and
3. The differences between women and men impact entrepreneurs in making decisions on their business growth.

With these objectives in mind, our interview instruments were focused on uncovering the various growth journeys and growth scenarios of impact entrepreneurs. We designed semi-structured interview guides, with open-ended questions to give a voice to the study participants, probe deeper into their answers, and ensure that questions would not lead to single-word responses.

The interview guide covered three major growth trajectories, namely the past, present and future growth milestones. It consisted of sections that probed impact entrepreneurs about their perception of business growth. This included their decision making process around pursuing business growth; the range of strategies they undertook; risks and challenges they faced throughout their growth journeys; and the corresponding ecosystem enablers at the individual, social, community and societal levels interacted with.

In developing questions related to future growth scenarios, we were particularly guided by anticipated anthropology that focuses on identifying plausible future scenarios, how people anticipate them, and their desires and fears towards those futures (Strzelecka, 2013).

The last section was designed to understand impact entrepreneurs' perceptions on gender norms. We used supplementary tools as a prompt, one of which included presenting research findings on women entrepreneurship and existing gender norms in Indonesia. All sections helped us in identifying mental models, systemic factors, and underlying beliefs that cause gender gaps and systemic barriers for women impact entrepreneurs.

Utilized specifically for the ecosystem enablers, the triangulation interview instruments were designed to unearth tensions and collect counter stories, perceptions of gender norms, and future scenarios based on opportunity areas. In particular, we presented insights that we gathered from our interviews with women and men impact entrepreneurs for discussion. Because our study included different ecosystem enablers, such as policy makers, investment firms, business associations and development partners, we designed separate triangulation interview guides that were tailored to their backgrounds and experiences.

As part of our triangulation interviews, we also used participation observation in various public forums and FGDs to further understand emerging discourse and interventions geared towards helping women impact entrepreneurs grow their businesses. This was also a mechanism for us to indirectly achieve our objectives to document counter stories, identify their mental models, and survey perceptions of gender norms as adverse consequences that women impact entrepreneurs face.

Before making use of them in both our in-depth and triangulation interviews, all instruments were tested and refined based on feedback received from women impact entrepreneurs. They were all finalized after two rounds of testing.

Recruiting participants

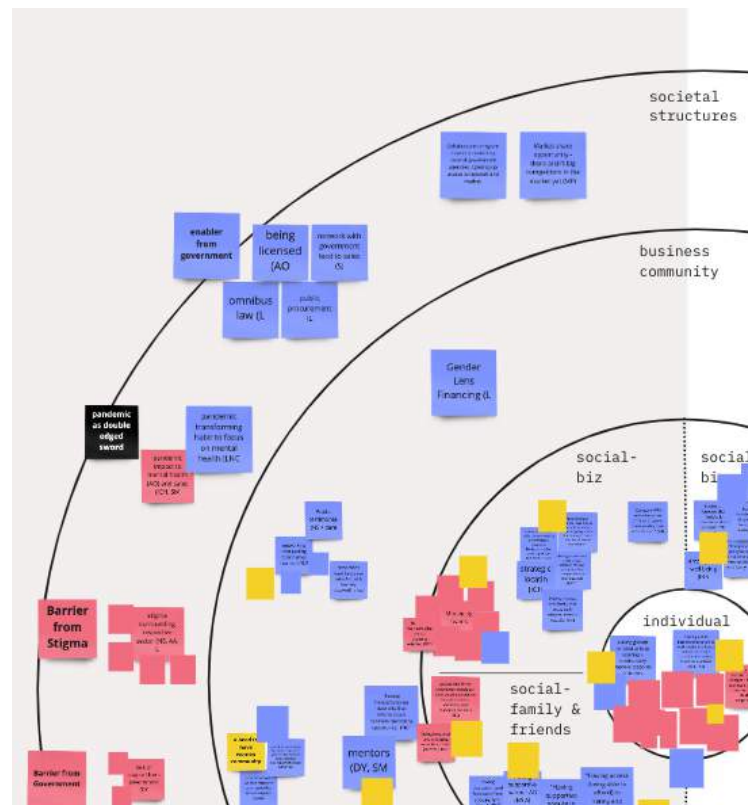
Due to the specificity of our target population (which was a very specific cohort of impact entrepreneurs), we employed a snowball or chain-referral sampling strategy. We leveraged digital tools to reach out to prospective study participants. Once responses were received, we sent out a screening questionnaire and digital informed consent form that provided information about the study and its objectives. The screening process functioned to identify the suitability of prospective participants within our study interests. If our criteria were met, we proceeded to set up a schedule that was convenient for them. For the ecosystem enablers, the same recruitment strategy was used. The primary difference was that the digital informed consent form was sent after we received positive responses from them about participating in virtual one-on-one interviews.

Conducting interviews

Researchers were assigned in groups of two to carry out the activity. One researcher acted as the lead interviewer, focusing on speaking with the study participant, whereas the other researcher acted as an observer and performed several technical tasks, such as recording the interview, jotting down key information and participating in probing the participants' responses. This distribution of work enabled the lead interviewer to focus on eliciting and identifying the mental models of the study participants. On the other side, by jotting down key information, the observer could help guide the lead interviewer on important questions to follow up on. Besides ensuring that we could acquire the information we needed, this approach was put in place to ensure a smooth interview process.

Recording and processing qualitative dataset

The in-depth interviews were conducted virtually using video conferencing tools. We opted for remote interviews due to safety concerns, given that the timing of our data collection was also at the height of COVID-19's Omicron variant outbreak. Each interview was recorded and saved in a password protected folder, which is accessible only by the research team. To help us acquire a comprehensive and high quality qualitative dataset, all the recordings were transcribed using a voice-to-text transcription software. The transcripts were also stored in a secure folder, and likewise only accessible to the researchers. The use of this software allowed us to promptly generate and access verbatim transcripts of the interviews. Having these transcripts at our disposal was crucial as a record of the interview to help us avoid recency bias throughout the synthesis process and report writing.





Synthesizing, analyzing, and reporting

The research team had regular debriefing sessions throughout the data collection process. We used these sessions as an avenue to reflect on and refine our interview instruments, techniques, emerging themes, as well as emerging findings. The first session usually took place after an interview was concluded (done individually by team members), coupled with a weekly session attended by all researchers. The latter served as an opportunity for everyone to learn from each other and give feedback on the interview experiences.

Once the qualitative data was collected and transcribed, we held several synthesis sessions that involved the participation of the researchers who collected the data and spoke with impact entrepreneurs. In general, the aim of the synthesis sessions was to identify patterns and derive insights which would contribute to opportunity areas.

Regarding the focus on impact entrepreneurs, the synthesis process was intended to achieve three objectives:

1. Mapping the entrepreneurship journeys of women and men impact entrepreneurs to identify growth milestones and pitfalls, as well as the systemic enablers and barriers at play;
2. Mapping the anticipated growth trajectories of women and men impact entrepreneurs to identify underlying mental models that color their entrepreneurship journeys;
3. Collecting insights on tension for further discussion during the following round of data collection.

The first round of the synthesis process began with clustering the qualitative dataset we obtained. To do this, we utilized N-VIVO, a qualitative data analysis computer software. Before we processed the data, we created a coding table based on different criteria we wanted to further examine. Some criteria covered areas such as, definition of growth, contributing factors to decision to grow, range of strategies, perception on gender norms, suggested interventions, and perception and type of risks. By preparing the coding table, we could easily assign a particular text with a code. The results from the first round of synthesis was the basis for subsequent synthesis activities to map out the growth trajectories of impact entrepreneurs; identify their mental models; and corroborate as well as complete the systems actor map.

Once the first round of synthesis was concluded, we presented the insights to ecosystem enablers during the key informant interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the tensions and to collect counter stories from ecosystem enablers. After wrapping up the in-depth interviews with impact entrepreneurs and first round of synthesis, we presented our preliminary insights and actionable opportunity areas to UN Women Indonesia to obtain feedback. The session further informed us how to proceed to the next round of synthesis and complete the key informant interviews.

After concluding our triangulation interviews with ecosystem enablers and incorporating the feedback we received, we conducted a final round of synthesis before we started writing the report. The report was drafted collaboratively by our research team, reviewed by each researcher involved in the study, and peer-reviewed by UN Women Indonesia.

Ensuring research ethics and safety

Throughout our activities, we prioritized the privacy and well-being of our researchers and study participants, especially as our study was conducted in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. At every component, health and safety protocols were in place. Furthermore, considering the characteristics of our study participants (who were C-level executives of businesses and might not be able to attend in-person meetings), we mostly conducted the interviews remotely using video conferencing tools.

Before speaking with our study participants, we ensured the research team acquired their prior consent. Our study participants were fully informed about their participation in the interviews, how we would record the conversation, and how their data would be used. We provided them with an opportunity to ask any questions about the research and skip certain parts of the interview should they feel uncomfortable answering them. To minimize research fatigue that could have occurred during the session, we informed them in advance that they could take a short break anytime they would like to.

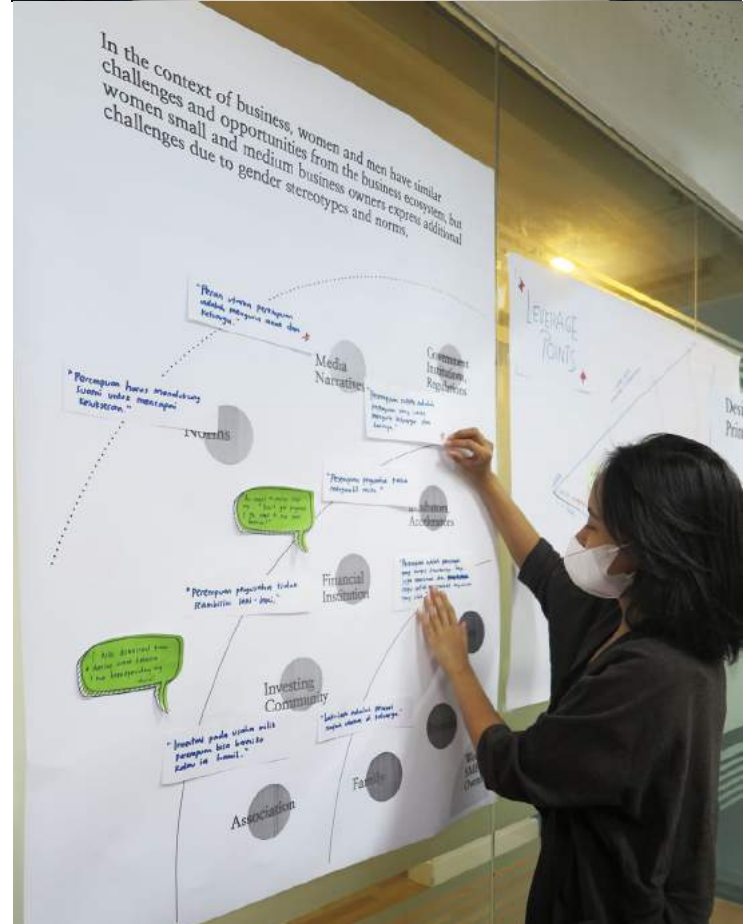
Cognizant of the sensitivity of the information shared by our study participants, safeguarding their confidentiality and data privacy was our priority. For this reason, we relied on de-identification to remove any personal identifiable information, by using a unique naming convention coding to store individual records and only the researchers were allowed access to the raw data. In addition, the quotes used in this report are not verbatim nor based on any single participant, instead they represent aggregated insights or personas.

Developing recommendations

In developing the opportunity areas, we gained insights for action through triangulation interviews with ecosystem enablers as well as from concrete real-life intervention examples around the world. The intervention areas we outlined are within the range of gender-smart to gender transformative solutions. Although gender transformative is our aspiration to deconstruct the power dynamics and structures that perpetuate gender gaps, gender-smart is more viable for ecosystem enablers to mobilize their resources and actions which is why this range was selected. We assert that gender-smart solutions are the cornerstone of our journey towards gender transformative solutions. As part of our process, we also presented our insights and recommendations in the *International Conference on Women's Empowerment in G20* and used the feedback to solidify our recommendations.

Understanding the limitations of this study

Given the nature of our qualitative approach, it is essential to emphasize that our study is meant to study a phenomenon of a very specific cohort which may not represent the whole population. We focus on providing a thick, rich, and contextualized understanding of lived experiences of women impact entrepreneurs. Unlike quantitative studies, it is crucial to underscore that generalizability is not our intent. We collected the data over three months remotely and primarily covered major cities, which understandably might be different from other areas across Indonesia with unique characteristics. It is also important to highlight that our research participants were C-level executives of businesses in impact sectors and therefore, their experience might be different from other women entrepreneurs operating in different sectors. With these limitations in mind, it is probable that our findings might not be generalized to other contexts. Notwithstanding, we hope that our findings and insights from this study can serve as inspirations and mobilize action for transformative change that promotes gender equality.



About Pulse Lab Jakarta:

UN Global Pulse in Indonesia operates as Pulse Lab Jakarta, a joint data innovation facility of the United Nations and the Government of Indonesia (via the Ministry of National Development Planning). Functioning as an analytics partnerships accelerator, the lab operates in the problem, solution, and identity spaces where it applies mixed-methods research approaches.

As part of the UN Global Pulse network, the Lab works at the intersection of digital innovation and human sciences to inform, inspire, strengthen the ability of the United Nations family and those it serves to anticipate, respond and adapt to the challenges of today and tomorrow. Breaking Growth Barriers is a part of Pulse Lab Jakarta's flagship initiative on strengthening MSMEs for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

UN Global Pulse in Indonesia is grateful for the generous support of the Australian Government.

About UN Women:

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

In Indonesia, UN Women works with government, civil society organizations, academia, the media, the public and private sectors to address national priorities of gender equality and women's empowerment. Placing the advancement of women's rights at the center, one of the key focus for UN Women in Indonesia is on advancing women's economic empowerment, which this research contributes to.



