

Equipping women-led MSMEs to sustain and grow their businesses

Asia and the Pacific's digital revolution holds great potential to drive growth not only in the region but globally. Home to a dynamic and tech-savvy workforce and growth-driven micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), the region has the capacity to set the tone and pace for digital transformation and development that promotes gender equality and sustainability.



32,500+

**trained and to be trained
in Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam
and Nepal by 2026**

The backbone of the global economy, MSMEs account for 90% of businesses, generating 60-70% of employment and 50% of GDP worldwide. Despite its contributions, MSMEs do not receive enough recognition and support in most countries. Studies show that MSMEs, particularly women-owned and led businesses, have consistently faced challenges including restricted access to funding, limited opportunities for capacity building and networking, and slow digital adoption.

In response to these challenges, the Accelerate My Business (AMB) program equips women-led MSMEs, particularly those in rural and remote communities, with crucial digital skills and tools to adapt to the digital economy and expand economic opportunity across Asia and the Pacific. AMB seeks to support hard-to-reach women-led MSMEs to gain practical skills to sustain and grow their business.

The Asia Foundation collaborated with AT&T and Visa to launch the program in Malaysia and Indonesia, which reached 6,500 participants in 2022. In Malaysia, this initiative was fully endorsed and supported by the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives. The Asia Foundation also brought in DHL Express Malaysia as a capacity-building partner, and the partnership included a new module titled 'Go Global with DHL'.



The AMB program is looking forward to expanding to Nepal and Vietnam in 2023. The Foundation is proud to collaborate once again with Visa in implementing the program in Vietnam. AMB in Vietnam welcomes new corporate partners, such as Payoneer and DHL. The program expansion in Vietnam is expected to reach 25,000 participants within a period of three years.

AMB in Nepal is funded under the South Asia Grants Program by the United States Department of State, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA). Launching in September 2023, AMB is being piloted in Koshi province and will be upskilling up to 300 women entrepreneurs in Nepal.

In 2023, AMB will be supporting more Malaysian MSMEs through its partnership with Bank Simpanan Nasional Malaysia (BSN). This new partnership aims to upskill up to 750 micro and small business owners across Malaysia.

The Accelerate Approach

Aimed to address the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, the AMB curriculum includes live, instructor-led virtual training sessions, self-paced learning, engaging speaker series by industry leaders, and an open-hour session for additional support and networking. It provides practical instructions on starting and running a business and includes activities, worksheets, self-assessments, and additional resources to refer to along the way.

The AMB program also offers mentorship opportunities for women-led businesses to deepen their knowledge and learning. Through these activities, we hope for women-led MSMEs to be better equipped with the business acumen to tackle challenges and remain competitive, particularly in a post-pandemic environment.



AMB is part of The Asia Foundation's Future Skills Alliance (FSA), a collective impact platform for private and public sector partners to deliver future skills at scale to the region's underserved groups.

Through a collective impact model, FSA members contribute their unique assets and resources to support digital skilling programs and related social, environmental, and governance efforts across the region. FSA creates a pathway for businesses to collaborate with governments and nonprofits to future-proof and re-skill people for new opportunities in the digital economy.

For more information, visit futureskillsalliance.org or email futureskillsalliance@asiafoundation.org



The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives and expanding opportunities across Asia and the Pacific. Informed by decades of experience and deep local expertise, our work across the region is focused on good governance, women's empowerment and gender equality, inclusive economic growth, environment and climate action, and regional and international relations.