

[Insert bank logo]

[Insert funder's logo]

[Insert provider's logo]

[Insert Project Title]

[Adapt picture]

Problem statement

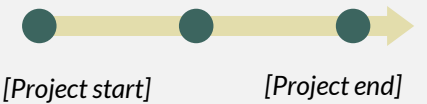
Briefly describe the systemic problem the intervention aimed to address. Focus on structural gaps, underserved client segments, or market failures. Include key baseline figures if available.

Template text suggestion

“In [country], [brief context about SME financing gap or inclusion issue]. In [year], [implementing partner(s)] partnered with [bank] to address [specific barrier or underserved segment]. The [following potential] was identified.”

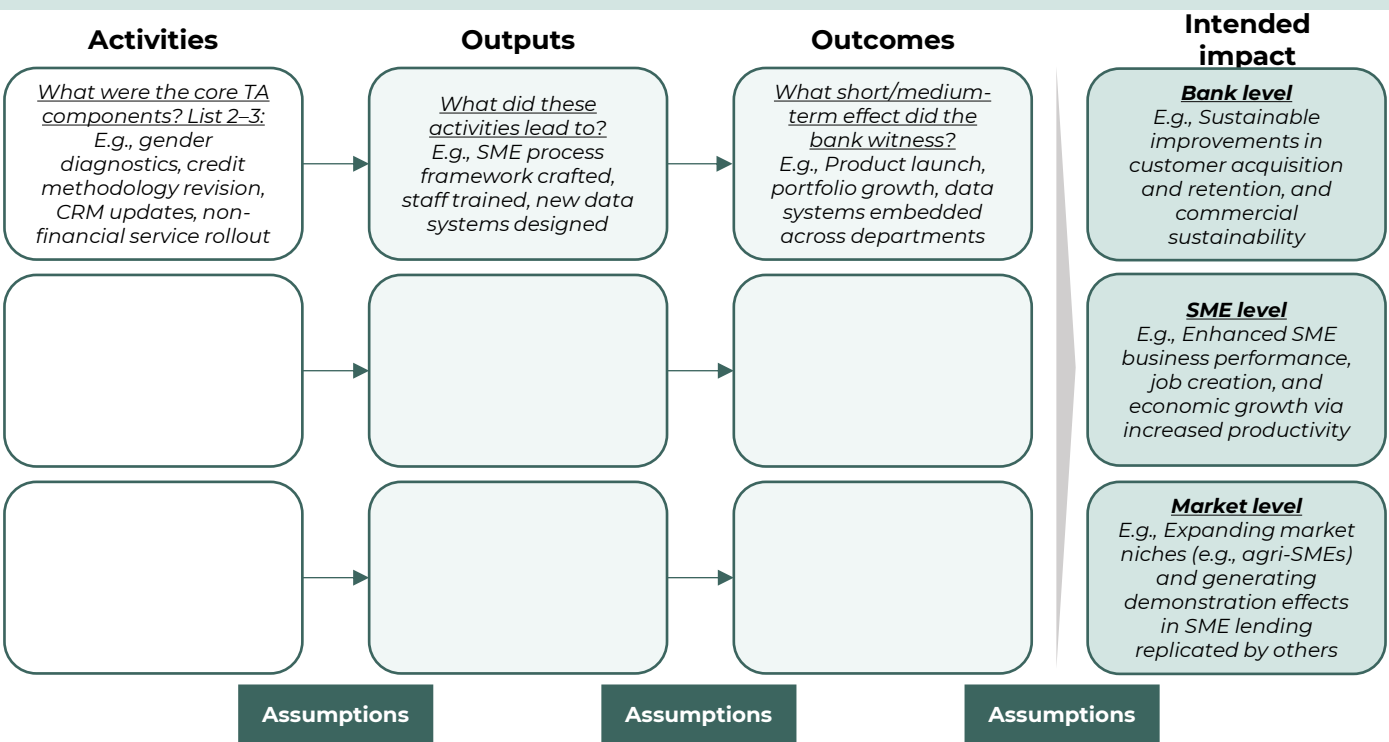
[Add flag]

- **Country:** [Insert country]
- **Bank:** [Insert partner bank name]
- **Funding or technical partner** [Insert names]
- **Focus area:** [Insert key targets such as WSMEs, climate-resilient SMEs, etc.]
- **Timeline:**



Theory of Change

[Insert one-liner summarizing the intervention]



Contact Us

Insert contact info

Insert webpage

[Insert bank logo]

[Insert funder's logo]

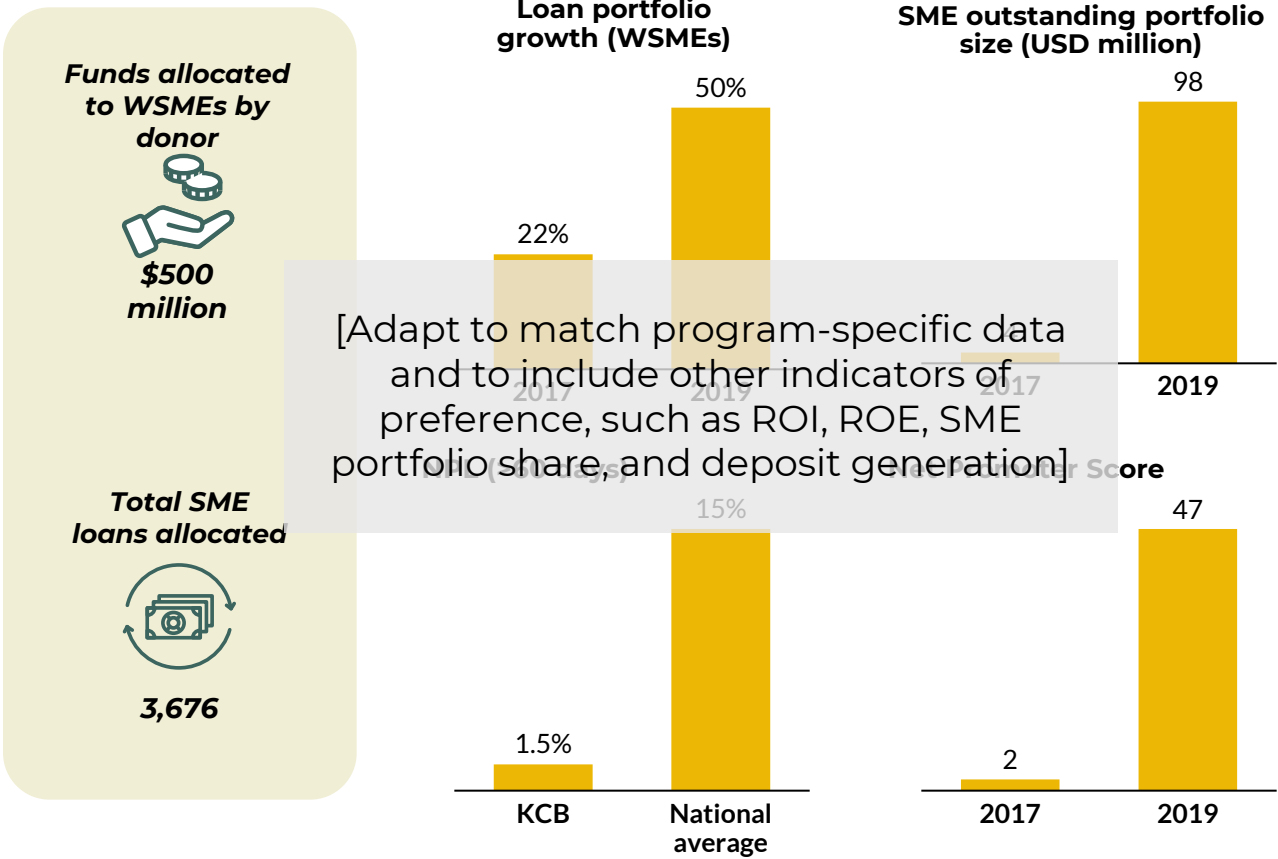
[Insert provider's logo]

Main outcomes

[Summarize key result in 1-2 lines. E.g., “This intervention led to X portfolio growth and reached Y SMEs through bundled financial and non-financial services.”]

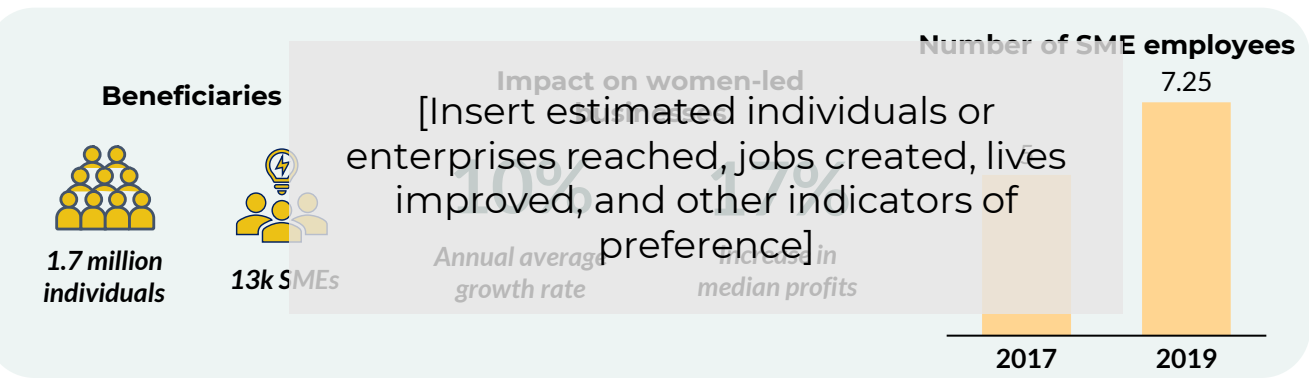
Financial outcomes

[Insert opening line to introduce the financial results of the program]



Social impact

[Insert opening line to introduce the social outcomes of the program]



Impact story



[Include a 2-3 sentence impact story from an SME that reflects the change experienced because of or during the program.]

“[Insert quote from program beneficiary]” – [Author]



Lessons learned

Main challenges

Bank-level: *[What internal factors limited implementation or adoption? e.g., systems, staff incentives, coordination]*

A Funder / Provider: *[What were the strategic, governance, or learning challenges?]*

What worked well

Program rollout: *[What aspects of the TA design enabled traction? e.g., piloting, integration with credit or CRM, non-financial service delivery]*

Program governance: *[What coordination practices or partnerships supported results? e.g., shared milestones, adaptive planning]*

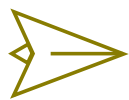
Recommendations for similar programs

[What should other funders or implementers consider replicating or avoiding? Include 3–5 concise insights covering both success factors and critical risks.]

[Insert bank logo]

[Insert funder's logo]

[Insert provider's logo]



References and additional resources

[Insert references and resources that can provide further information on the case study]



Reference 1



Reference 1



Reference 1



Reference 1



Reference 1



Reference 1

About [insert organization name]

[Insert funder's logo]

[Insert short description of the organization(s) publishing the impact assessment, including mission, focus area, and countries of operation, among others]



Optimizing the Business Model of SMEs and WSMEs

Problem statement

In Kenya, SMEs' lack of financial resources is driven by banks' inability to offer products and services tailored to their needs, which is particularly acute for WSMEs. In 2016, Women's World Banking (WWB) partnered with Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB), supported by Argidius, to address these gaps by conducting a field study to **understand the constraints** that limited banks from better serving SMEs. These included:

- A lack of understanding of SMEs' needs and gaps
- A fragmented business model to service SMEs
- A lack of SME appropriate lending products

The assessment of KCB showed that **the bank had tremendous potential to further serve existing customers**, as of the ~1M MSME account holders at the end of 2016 only 7% had a loan with the bank.

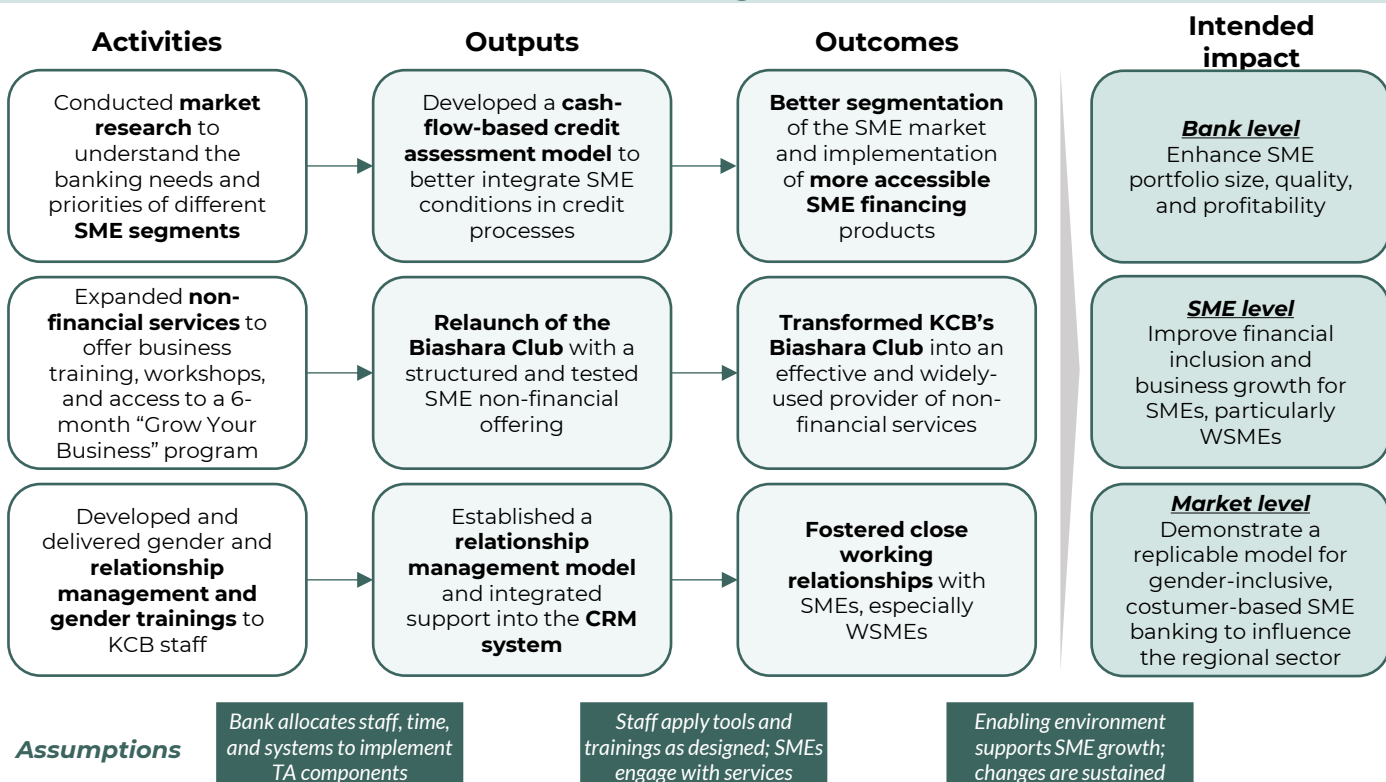


- **Country:** Kenya
- **Bank:** KCB
- **Funding or technical partner** Argidius Foundation and Women's World Banking
- **Focus area:** SMEs, WSMEs
- **Timeline:**



Theory of Change

In response, Argidius and WWB supported KCB over a 3-year TA program, starting with a 10-branch pilot and reaching 200+ branches by 2020, focused on improving its SME offerings



Main outcomes

KCB unlocked \$500M for 13k SMEs by segmenting the market and tailoring non-financial services, demonstrating the power of demand-driven, relationship-based banking

Financial outcomes

The following financial outcomes demonstrate how strategic changes translated into real commercial value for KCB:

Funds allocated to WSMEs by donor



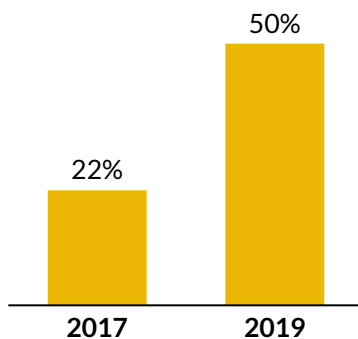
\$550 million

Total capital mobilized

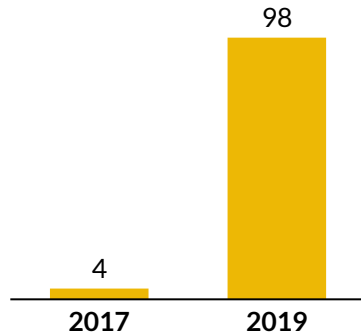


\$1.1 billion

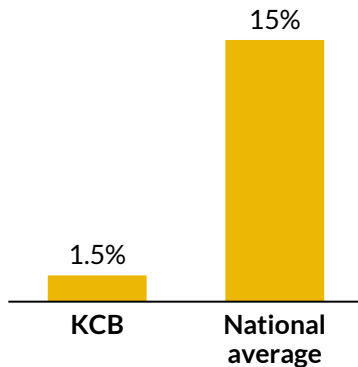
Loan portfolio growth (WSMEs)



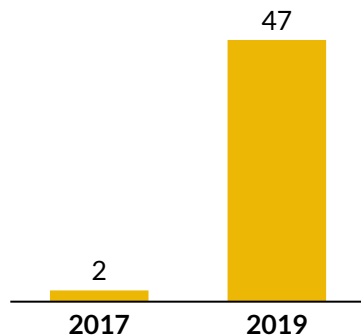
SME outstanding portfolio size (USD million)



NPL (>60 days)



Net Promoter Score



Social impact

KCB also advanced key development outcomes, empowering SMEs and promoting gender inclusion.

Beneficiaries (2023)



67k full time jobs created



30k SMEs

Impact on women-led businesses

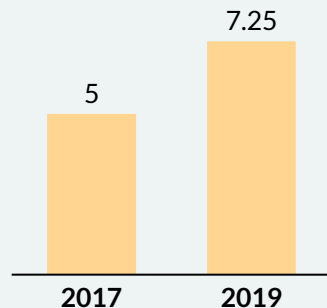
10%

Annual average growth rate

17%

Increase in median profits

Number of SME employees



Impact story



After attending Biashara Club training, a woman entrepreneur, originally trained in early childhood education, gained business confidence. She formed a management committee composed of staff and parents to run her school, balancing infrastructure and finance by leveraging the strengths of both male and female committee members.

“After attending the training sessions, I learned a lot about management. Since then, I found management of the school very efficient.” - Female SME Owner – Machakos

Lessons learned

Main challenges

Bank (KCB)

- **System limitations:** Inflexible core systems, delayed integration of gender tracking, and service improvements.
- **Cultural shift:** Moving to relationship banking required deep behavioral change, not just new tools.
- **Internal misalignment:** Coordination gaps between business units slowed rollout and learning loops.
- **Regulatory barriers:** Interest rate caps limited the flexibility of SME lending.

TA Funder (Argidius and WWB)

- **Group-level buy-in:** Lack of early alignment with KCB Group slowed progress across markets.
- **Change ownership:** Embedding reform required more than technical support; it demanded cultural traction.
- **Measuring change:** Assessing bank-wide adoption and sustained use of tools post-TA was complex.

What worked well

Program rollout

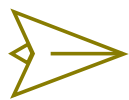
- **Piloting before scaling** allowed KCB to refine the model, credit methodology, and staff tools before broader rollout.
- **Embedding non-financial services into the customer journey** (via Biashara Club) improved SME confidence, loyalty, and credit utilization.
- **Relationship managers became trusted advisors**, improving loan quality and customer satisfaction (NPS rose from +2 to +47).
- **Gender-intentional design and training** helped increase women-led SME lending from 22% to over 50%.

Program governance

- **Strong program partnership.** Clear alignment and trust between KCB, WWB, and Argidius enabled effective collaboration and course correction.
- **Integrated, cross-functional support.** TA covered credit, CRM, gender, and training to reinforce change across the bank.
- **Pathway to institutional uptake.** Tools were tailored to KCB's systems and workflows, making adoption and sustainability more likely.






Recommendations for similar programs

- **Link inclusion to business goals.** Framing women-led SME banking as a growth and risk strategy helped drive buy-in and long-term adoption.
- **Ensure leadership commitment to SME banking.** KCB's Success was rooted in a strategic focus on SMEs, championed from the top and reinforced throughout the organization.
- **Embed delivery capacity in-house.** A dedicated project manager within the bank was key to aligning teams, accelerating execution, and sustaining momentum.
- **Build for sustainability early.** Tools and processes were more widely adopted when integrated into existing systems and aligned with staff capacity building.



References and additional resources

[Insert references and resources that can provide further information on the case study]

-  [Research report](#) on the effectiveness and outcomes of the project (November 2020): *Empowering MSMEs: Creating Better Banking Experiences for Women-Led Enterprises in Kenya*
-  Recording of a [webinar](#) on the project (1 hour, December 2020)
-  [Article](#) on lessons from this and a similar project (September 2018): *Lessons in Change: Management from KCB Bank and Diamond Bank to Better Serve Women-led Enterprises*
-  [Blog post](#) on the research findings on the project (November 2020): *New evidence on how to empower women-owned businesses in Kenya*
-  Toolkit on women's economic empowerment (2021): [Women's Financial Inclusion Toolkit](#)

About the project partners



Women's World Banking is a global nonprofit advancing financial inclusion for low-income women. Working in nearly 30 countries, it partners with financial institutions and policymakers to design and scale women-focused financial solutions and leadership programs.



The Argidius Foundation is a Swiss philanthropic organization that supports the growth of SMEs in emerging markets by improving business development services and entrepreneurial ecosystems, with a focus on regions like East Africa and Central America.

