WORKING WITHOUT BORDERS
PRELIMINARY INSIGHTS ON THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF ONLINE GIG WORK FOR WOMEN FROM AN UPCOMING GLOBAL STUDY

Nadina Iacob
Prepared for the webinar Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Can the Gig Economy Bring Labor Opportunities for Women?
March 14, 2023
Our approach to studying trends in the online gig economy

Key research questions

How inclusive is the online gig economy based on six dimensions of inclusion? What role do regional/local platforms (i.e. platforms concentrated in a specific region or country) play?

Figure: Six dimension of inclusion of online gig workers

Methodology

- **Global survey**
  - Internet based survey covering 17 countries from the six World Bank regions

- **Country deep dives**
  - Country-level surveys and additional platform insights from four countries

- **Platform surveys**
  - Surveys of online gig workers on 10 online gig work platforms (nine online freelancing platforms and one microwork platform)

- **Interviews and focus group discussions**
  - Interviews with representatives of 28 platforms
  - Focus group discussions with selected online gig workers in Kenya and Pakistan

Note: The study covered several other research questions and relied on additional methodological approaches; this slide refers only to the applicable research questions and the methodology used to build a profile of online gig workers.
Globally, women participate in online gig work to a greater extent compared to the general labor market, services sector and informal sector.

The share of female online gig workers compared to female workers in the services sector, by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Online gig workers</th>
<th>Service sector workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAR</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Global survey conducted by the team

The share of female online gig workers compared to female workers in the informal sector, by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Online gig workers</th>
<th>Informal sector workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Global survey conducted by the team
Some gig platforms, in different countries, are doing better in including women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Women Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Workana</td>
<td>49.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SoyFreelancer</td>
<td>52.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country/Region average</td>
<td>41.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>GLOW</td>
<td>58.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eRezeki</td>
<td>51.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country/Region average</td>
<td>38.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>YouDo</td>
<td>29.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country/Region average</td>
<td>48.62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Global survey conducted by the team; country/regional averages of labor market participation were retrieved from the World Development Indicators Database.
Flexibility and the ability to earn additional income are key drivers of women’s participation in online gig work

- Compared to men, women are more likely to do online gig work to earn additional income. Flexibility is also a key factor in getting women to join the online gig economy.
- Flexible working hours can help women balance their caregiving responsibilities with the need to earn a living.
- Men value more the ability to learn new digital skills and to earn additional income or higher pay.

### Main reason for doing online gig work by gender, global survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility on time and location</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get additional income or higher pay</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn new digital skills</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow me to be my own boss</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No job opportunity</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Main reason for doing online gig work by gender, platform survey (Workana)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility on time and location</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get additional income or higher pay</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn new digital skills</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow me to be my own boss</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No job opportunity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Global survey conducted by the team

Source: Platform survey conducted by the team on the LATAM platform Workana
Women do online gig work as a secondary occupation, spending part of their time on gig work and earning supplementary income

The intensity of online gig work based on income earned as a share of personal income and hours worked

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Less than 10 hours a week</th>
<th>Between 10 and 19 hours a week</th>
<th>More than 20 hours a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Less than 25% of personal income</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25%-50% of personal income</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 50% of personal income</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Main</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Urzi Brancati et al. (2020, p. 15)
Despite its advantages, online gig work still has untapped potential for women.

To bridge the gap, learning from local and regional best practices in including women is crucial.

Targeted support for acquiring skills and helping women develop as online freelancers and ultimately entrepreneurs could pave the path to fully reaping the benefits of online gig work.
Disrupting Unemployment through Digital Inclusion

Presented by: Maricruz Tabbia
The problems we address
The digital economy is here, and it is changing everything.

- **The skills gap is growing**: 67% of companies globally can’t find the talent with the skills they need*.
- **Companies are going remote**: 74% of CFOs will implement remote work permanently for a part of their employees**.
- **People want to work remotely**: 80% want to continue working from home after the pandemic***.

---

* Source: [skill gap data]
** Source: [CFO survey]
*** Source: [employee preference data]
Women have been left behind

51% of women with children leave their jobs due to the lack of flexibility.

Catalyst
We work to close the skills, unemployment, and gender gaps to help women stay employable and companies stay competitive in the digital economy.
We connect the dots:

Education +
Talent +
Employers +
Through our online academy we partner with governments to train women in the most demanded skills in the digital economy.

We empower women to prepare for the global job market with highly relevant and in demand remote readiness, and digital skills.
Our Programs

Remote Readiness Program
The program provides the tools that people and organizations need to manage teams and work effectively within remote environments.

Courses:
- Remote team management certification
- Remote work certification

E-commerce & Digital Marketing Program
The program provides the tools to set up an e-commerce and develop and implement digital marketing and social selling strategies.

Courses:
- Digital content creator certification
- E-commerce and social selling certification
- Digital marketing expert certification

Facebook Training Program
The program provides access to the most demanded Facebook certifications related to digital marketing and technical services.

Courses:
- Associate marketing certification
- Community management certification
- Technical services certification
The learning experience

We create personalized experiences on a large scale through our digital learning environment that is based on 3 pillars:

- **Blended Methodologies**: We combine live sessions and asynchronous learning materials.
- **Guided Instruction**: Our instructors' presence increases participants' engagement and completion rates.
- **Learning Sprints**: Because it takes rhythm to learn online, inspired by agile methodologies, we work with time sprints.

**Model**: Instructor led

**Format**: 100% online

**Duration**: 5-12 weeks

**Dedication**: 5 hs weekly avg
Our results
We keep our students engaged until the end

Testimonials

Natalia Jimenez Struss | Colombia
"It’s a complete course where you can learn many things. The teachers are clear and empathic. The team is good at accompaniment and are always ready to help. I learned a lot about how to start my business or contribute to one that is growing."

Analy Polanco | Guatemala
"Having an apprenticeship at this academic level, with professional people in their areas and countries is something unique. I feel fulfilled as a woman and as a professional. What pride to feel!"
Independence starts with the wallet
Talent Solutions

1. Remote Contingent Workforce Services
   - On Demand Professionals
   - Full-Time Professionals (FTPs)

2. “PayWorks” Payrolling Service
   - International Contractors
   - Full-Time Employees

3. Direct Hire Service
   - Full-Time Employees

4. Contract Recruiters
   - Single specialized recruiter
   - Recruitment Team + Tools
Work is something that is done, not a place you go.
What our Clients Seek the Most

Top 10 demanded type of tasks:

1. Customer Support
2. Project Management
3. Graphic Design
4. Translation
5. Personal Assistance
6. Recruiting
7. Social Media Management
8. Web design
9. Copywriting
10. Data entry
Benefits of working in SheWorks!

We keep our students engaged until the end.

- Work from anywhere in the world
- Work leading companies on meaningful projects
- Rely in our help to find clients
- Get paid in dollars smoothly and seamlessly. No delays
- Free access. There is no cost to join our marketplace
- Be the first to know about our free training and certification programs
Awards and Recognitions for SheWorks!

“Iconic Companies Creating a Better World for All”

“UN Equals in Tech Award Winners 2019”

“Leading case to close the gender gap”
LESSONS LEARNED ON THE DIGITAL INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN JORDAN AND LEBANON

WITH SUPPORT FROM

14 March 2023
Elvira Van Daele
Digital Inclusion project - Approach

- **Objective**: increase the digital inclusion of Jordanian & Lebanese female freelancers on a regional online talent marketplace

- **Target group**: higher educated female online freelancers with a strong technical skills set

- **Identified need**: increase the soft skills of the active, female freelancers so they win more bidding processes
Focus and Tools - upskilling through online training

Mastering the World of Online Freelancing:

1. Boosting your professional online presence
2. Successfully competing as an online freelancer
3. Managing an effective client-freelancer relationship
4. Mastering computer-assisted translation tools
5. Content writing that sticks

→ 20% commission fee waived for one year upon course completion.
Outreach and Results

- **Limited outreach** through a too small, initial pool of active freelancers: 222 women of which 214 enrolled in the training program, but only a third completed one or more training courses.

- Training results were good but lower uptake than expected:
  - 83% - improved knowledge
  - 86% - good investment of their time
  - 90% - recommends the training program to other freelancers.

- **Need to include more female freelancers** from Jordan and Lebanon in the online community:
  - Outreach through Social Media: very low conversion + large drop-outs in the training program (75%)
  - Outreach through local, strategic partners - Injaz Jordan and BDD Lebanon

→ The poor completion rate reveals significant **impediments** to reaching the right audience and keeping them engaged.
Obstacles faced by women that hinder their participation in the digital economy

- Legal Barriers. Only 10 countries have legal parity between men and women (World Bank, 2021).

- Financial/Banking Constraints. $1.48 trillion financing gap for women-owned SMEs (SME Finance Forum 2018).

- Socio-cultural Constraints. Freelance work in the digital economy will likely remain a secondary source of income rather than a primary job.

- Lack of Awareness of Opportunities.

- A Lack of Market Knowledge.


- Limited or Unreliable Access to Devices and the Internet and High Cost of Data. 17% gender gap in Internet usage in Africa & 7% gap in Asia & the Pacific (ITU 2020).

- Lack of training and/or training fatigue. Women need to feel part of a community and there should be a higher goal than just training.
Lessons on the digital inclusion of local women

- E-commerce is already a 26 trillion-dollar industry. However, for some regions, the highest growth is yet to be realized.

- Freelancing should not be overestimated as a preferred employment option.
  - Understand your market: socio-cultural reasons + legal frameworks
  - Most obstacles are not gender-related but are aggravated due to socio-cultural expectations.
  - Awareness raising is key.
  - Stakeholders must support advocacy to improve the legal framework for online freelancing.
  - Collaboration is needed with local partners to ensure effective outreach and promote freelancing (vs. social media).
  - Response rates may be higher when training is delivered through a blended learning approach.

- Solid, technical skills are a must to be able to compete online.
Lessons Learned and Recommendations

- The workforce gender gap extends to the digital economy. Platforms could boost market value by nearly $300 billion by closing gender gaps.

- It is important to create a sustainable, profitable project. Freelance offer and employer demand must go hand in hand.

- Advocate to improve legal restrictions.

- Address the lack of access to the internet and to IT devices.

- Address financial and formal banking constraints.

- Support awareness of online freelancing and its opportunities and close the knowledge gap.

- Engage universities and local organizations in identifying women interested in the digital economy.
Lessons Learned and Recommendations

- Increase knowledge-sharing among organizations.
- Support digital literacy and business classes such as marketing, including to girls in high school.
- Increase higher inclusion by offering highly skilled women from disadvantaged communities, initial, paid for work opportunities. Ensure job placement.
- Provide coaching and mentoring to create an online profile, start and complete training, and find work. Consider a blended learning approach.
- Build a community for support.
- Provide online employers with incentives to hire women, including from disadvantaged communities.
Five ways platforms can help women entrepreneurs thrive in the digital economy

“My house was far from my workplace and my little one was still a baby. In the end, I decided to resign... ultimately I started selling online.”
- Woman Vendor, Indonesia

“I never imagined that my first pay-out of PHP7,000 ($150) would increase to PHP50,000 ($1,000) per week.”
- Woman Vendor, Philippines

“Being an online seller has enabled me to do things for myself. It has helped me be more self-sufficient.”
- Woman Vendor, Nigeria

1. Recruiting
2. Training & Promotions
3. Platform Finance
4. High-value Sectors
5. Sex-Disaggregated Data
Related IFC publications

Learn more at
IFC.org/gender
IFC.org/Digital2Equal
WOMEN IN THE PLATFORM ECONOMY:
How can financial services be supportive?
In 2021, CGAP commissioned Dalberg Design to conduct primary research on workers’ position in platform ecosystems, their social and financial lives, and common pain points they experience that could be addressed through financial services. This deck complements the publication *How Can Financial Services Support Platform Work? Insights from Five Emerging Markets* by providing greater detail on the experiences of women platform workers.

The findings presented in this slide deck are based on qualitative research with over 400 platform workers across five countries and five platform sectors.

- Over 150 in-depth interviews / focus group discussions
- 237 structured interview (survey) respondents*
- 40% of all research participants women

*All quantitative findings in this deck come from this survey (purposive, non-representative sample).
II. PATHWAYS INTO AND WORK ON PLATFORMS

WOMEN’S WORK ON PLATFORMS TENDED TO BE PART-TIME

As in the offline world, more women worked on platforms part-time relative to men. However, a similar proportion of both women and men (~30%) put in a “full-time” day on platforms.

Similarly, on average, women’s income from platform work tended to represent a smaller share of household income than men’s; however, a similar proportion (around 25%) reported that their platform income represents 100% of household income.
Women were more likely than men to see platform work as an opportunity to supplement their personal and household income. They were also more likely to pursue platform work as a long-term career opportunity. Men were more likely to see platform work as a temporary source of income while they looked for a full-time job.

“We decide our timeslots when we want to work. We can take care of our family and other personal things. Time flexibility is most important. So we don’t have to accept work at night; if you want to take a holiday, you can take it”

U.P., beautician, India
WOMEN WERE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO REPORT PER-JOB INCOME INCREASES ON PLATFORMS, AND THEIR DAILY INCOME WAS HIGHER THAN MEN’S

Since starting platforms work...

- The amount I earn per job has decreased
  - Women: 21%
  - Men: 28%

- The amount I earn per job has increased
  - Women: 63%
  - Men: 52%

On average, how much do you typically earn on a day you work for a platform? (Select one answer) (N=237)

- 151% of min wage or more
  - Women: 51%
  - Men: 58%

- 126-150% of min wage
  - Women: 16%
  - Men: 16%

- 100-125% of min wage
  - Women: 8%
  - Men: 5%

- 75-99% of min wage
  - Women: 9%
  - Men: 6%

- 74% of min wage or less
  - Women: 15%
  - Men: 16%

The amount I earn per job has increased

- Women: 63%
- Men: 52%

The amount I earn per job has decreased

- Women: 21%
- Men: 28%
PLATFORM INCOME HELPED MOST WOMEN TO BETTER MEET DAILY COSTS AND ABOUT HALF TO COPE WITH COVID

Has platform work helped you cope with the financial challenges of COVID-19? (N=237)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since starting platform work, has it been easier or more difficult to cover the day-to-day costs of living (e.g. to manage your daily expense budget)? (N=237)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much easier</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchanged</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More difficult</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much more difficult</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. WOMEN WORKERS’ FINANCIAL LIVES

THE EFFECTS OF PLATFORM INCOME ON WOMEN’S ABILITY TO SET AND MEET FINANCIAL GOALS AND TO SAVE WERE MORE MIXED

Since starting platform work, has it been easier or harder to set and achieve financial goals (e.g. budget, track and manage your income and expenses)? (N=237)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More difficult</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchanged</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much easier</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Have your savings practices changed since you started doing platform work? (N=237)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Savings Practice</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My habits haven’t changed</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I save less than I used to</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I save more than I used to</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WOMEN PLATFORM WORKERS VALUED FINANCIAL MECHANISMS THAT PROMOTE LONG-TERM SECURITY

In India, 87 percent of women wanted financial planning support, while this did not even figure in the top four choices for men. Women also expressed appetite for other types of non-financial assistance to help their businesses grow, e.g. information on marketing.

“I prefer to keep my money in dollars than to convert it — it might depreciate. There are forex brokering organizations that take your money, trade the money for you, and pay you return on investment. I’m already an investor with one organization. I love them for their credibility. It’s even better than putting your money in a savings account at the bank.”

Merry, e-lancer, Nigeria
WOMEN WHO’VE STARTED PLATFORM WORK ACCESS INSURANCE AT THREE TIMES THE RATE OF MEN

Across survey countries, 14% of women reported using insurance since starting on platforms, compared to 4% of men. Women workers in India were particularly interested in accessing insurance through platforms. Roughly 73% said they would want life insurance compared to 54% of men. Additionally, 67% said having insurance in case of accident or sickness would help achieve their long-term goals, as opposed to just 38% of men.

“I have already joined a funeral insurance policy here in South Africa that will take my body home.”

Tendai, house cleaner, South Africa
In South Africa, one-third of women survey respondents said some type of insurance could incentivize them to stay in platform work.

In Kenya, health and life insurance were second and third behind greater pay in terms of factors that could incent women to leave platforms for a full-time job.

“We pay cash for anything to do with medical…I would love a medical insurance”

Archie, online seller, Kenya
More women than men reported using savings and deposits after beginning platform work.

However, women’s adoption of loans lags far behind men’s.
DESPITE SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND PLATFORM CHANNELS, CAPITAL REMAINS THE BIGGEST BARRIER TO GROWING WOMEN’S PLATFORM INCOME

Main barrier to growing income in platforms work (N=237)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The platform provides no opportunities to increase my pay aside from working longer hours</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have money needed for investments to grow my income on the platform (e.g. by purchasing required assets, inventory, training, advertisements, etc)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family and broader community don’t approve of me investing to grow my income on the platform</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is too complicated for someone with my educational background to grow my income on the platform aside from working longer hours</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am discriminated against because of my gender</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who do you go to for financial support to enable you to do platform work? (N=237)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support channels on my platform</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My spouse</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends and neighbors</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ROSCA</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My peers through WhatsApp and other social media</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support channels on my platform</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DESPITE SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND PLATFORM CHANNELS, CAPITAL REMAINS THE BIGGEST BARRIER TO GROWING WOMEN’S PLATFORM INCOME
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR BANK LOANS WERE A FORMIDABLE OBSTACLE TO WOMEN ACCESSING CREDIT

“I won’t lie, I haven’t tried with the bank, I’m a little scared. I feel because my business has been so informal for such a long time is just going to be a hustle to get that money, and I have to probe the money from this business now. That is why I’m trying to fix the financials of the business. If I want to buy a house the bank will need to see all the papers.”

N.N., beauty services provider, South Africa

“I would...maybe get a loan from a bank that’s giving a low interest rate. I didn’t have security for it, so I didn’t manage to get it from them.”

Archie, online seller, Kenya
RECOMMENDATIONS ON DESIGNING FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR WOMEN PLATFORM WORKERS

Customize financial products and services to help women maximize the benefits of platform work for the long term.

Like men, women platform workers need tools to smooth consumption, mitigate risks, and provide liquidity over the short term. However, more women than men looked at platform work as a long-term source of income. Long-term savings, credit to expand businesses, and insurance products could all help them use platform income to build assets in alignment with this horizon. To this end, investment loans that enable women to grow their platform income and savings products that allow them to accumulate resources for old age would be especially relevant for women platform workers.

Take note of women’s family obligations.

Women in our study often linked their financial aspirations back to security for their families. In addition to the savings products mentioned above, medical insurance that covers children and other family members could be particularly useful to women platform workers, since others’ illnesses often directly affect women’s ability to work.

Bundle financial products with non-financial services to amplify their effectiveness.

Investment loans can’t help female platform workers who can’t provide the records to complete the application. In addition to business advisory services, many women wanted to understand how to plan their financial futures.

Leverage women’s networks.

Many women told us that social support has been a key enabler not only in alerting them to platform work opportunities but also allowing them to test out the work and grow their incomes.

Tailor financial service offerings to the needs of specific sub-segments.

This research has demonstrated the wide diversity of women’s experiences on platforms, which vary tremendously based on factors such as sector, age/life stage, and local gender norms. It is therefore critical that ideas such as the above be adapted to the needs of specific sub-segments of women platform workers.

Ensure worker flexibility and design services to mitigate risks.

To the extent that such product offerings increase worker loyalty and engagement, they could also benefit platforms. However, any products/services delivered to platform workers must not limit their ability to switch platforms and must account for the risk of sudden pay rate fluctuations that have been known to occur.
