

## **Advancing Financial Inclusion and Resilience in Global Supply Chains:**

A Practical Guide for Financial  
Service Providers using Examples  
from Wage Digitalization in the  
Garment Sector





## Executive Summary

An estimated 60 million workers power the global garment industry<sup>1</sup>, the majority of whom are women, under 35 years old and underbanked. Many are aggregated in large workplace settings which are easy to reach. Expanding the financial inclusion and resilience of this significant market segment can lead to benefits for women and men workers, employers, financial service providers and the wider economy – a win-win all around.

Financial service providers can play a catalytic role in developing an active new market segment using wage digitalization as an effective entry point when coupled with relevant and affordable financial products and services (such as remittances and savings). This can drive revenue generation and long-term strategic benefits for financial service providers while expanding inclusion of women and men in the digital economy and improving their financial health.

RISE and Mastercard have demonstrated that wage digitalization, coupled with financial capability training that considers the needs of women has led to 91% of workers being paid into accounts (up from 46%); 85% of workers accessing mobile money accounts (up from 52%) and 81% of workers saving regularly (up from 56%).<sup>2</sup>

In this guide for financial service providers, RISE shares insights and recommendations to develop this garment sector segment:

- 1.** Acquire new customers at scale through responsible wage digitalization;
- 2.** Drive account usage of a range of financial products and services; and
- 3.** Expand product offering to build financial security

A long-term and collaborative approach is critical to the segment; understanding customer needs, especially women and building trust and reputation through strong customer service. In doing this, financial service providers can unlock new opportunities for growth in this segment, creating sustained returns and advancing financial inclusion and resilience for garment workers.

“Millions of underbanked garment workers can benefit and grow when given access to a broad set of financial services. Bringing individuals into the digital economy is just the first step. Next, we need to work with them to build financial security, resilience and health. We want to give them the opportunity to improve their financial well-being and plan for the future, confidently.”

**SUBHASHINI CHANDRAN, SENIOR  
VICE PRESIDENT, SOCIAL IMPACT,  
MASTERCARD CENTER FOR  
INCLUSIVE GROWTH**



## RISE and Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth

RISE and Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth have worked together since 2018 to scale up responsible wage digitalization in the garment sector. The partnership pairs digital wages with financial capability training in multiple markets, providing much needed financial planning resources for managers and workers, especially women. This has included supporting 26 garment suppliers in Cambodia and Egypt, with over 51,000 workers (63% women), which led to increased payroll efficiency for employers, increased financial inclusion and security for workers, and a new active market segment for financial service providers.



# The Garment Sector: A Viable Market Segment

There is a significant opportunity for financial service providers to develop a new market segment through the garment sector, leading to inclusion in the digital economy and improved financial health for millions of garment workers.

An estimated 60 million garment workers<sup>3</sup> power the billion-dollar global garment industry, for example, there are an estimated 2.5 million garment workers in Egypt<sup>4</sup> and 1 million in Cambodia.<sup>5</sup> They are paid regular wages and are concentrated and aggregated in large workplace settings, enabling efficient, scalable outreach for financial service providers. The majority of garment workers are women, many of whom are under 35 years old.<sup>6</sup>

Many sourcing countries in global supply chains have, or are developing the financial and digital ecosystem infrastructure for financial service providers to offer accessible, relevant and affordable financial products and services to garment workers. However, many workers remain underbanked and are paid cash wages, or if they are paid into accounts, simply withdraw 100% of their wages on payday or hand over control of their accounts to others.<sup>7</sup> This limits their ability to save and plan for the future, especially for women.

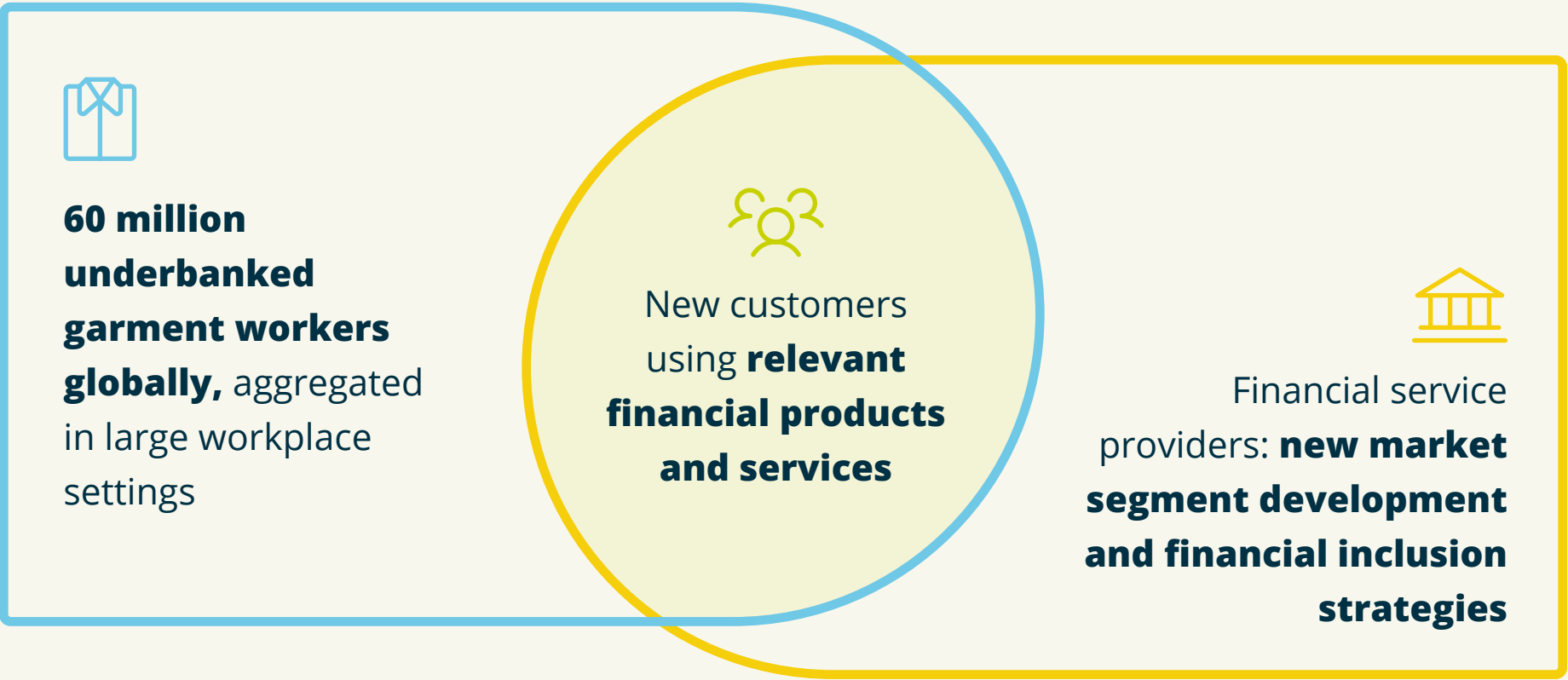
In bringing these workers into the digital economy, financial service providers can play a catalytic role, driving financial inclusion and developing the customer journey from access and usage of financial services, to increasing financial security, and ultimately improving financial health (see diagram).<sup>8</sup>

*Financial health goes beyond financial inclusion and considers how a person manages their financial life and their feelings with regards to money. It is the measure of one's ability to manage expenses, pursue financial goals, and absorb financial shocks that have an impact on financial well-being.<sup>9</sup>*

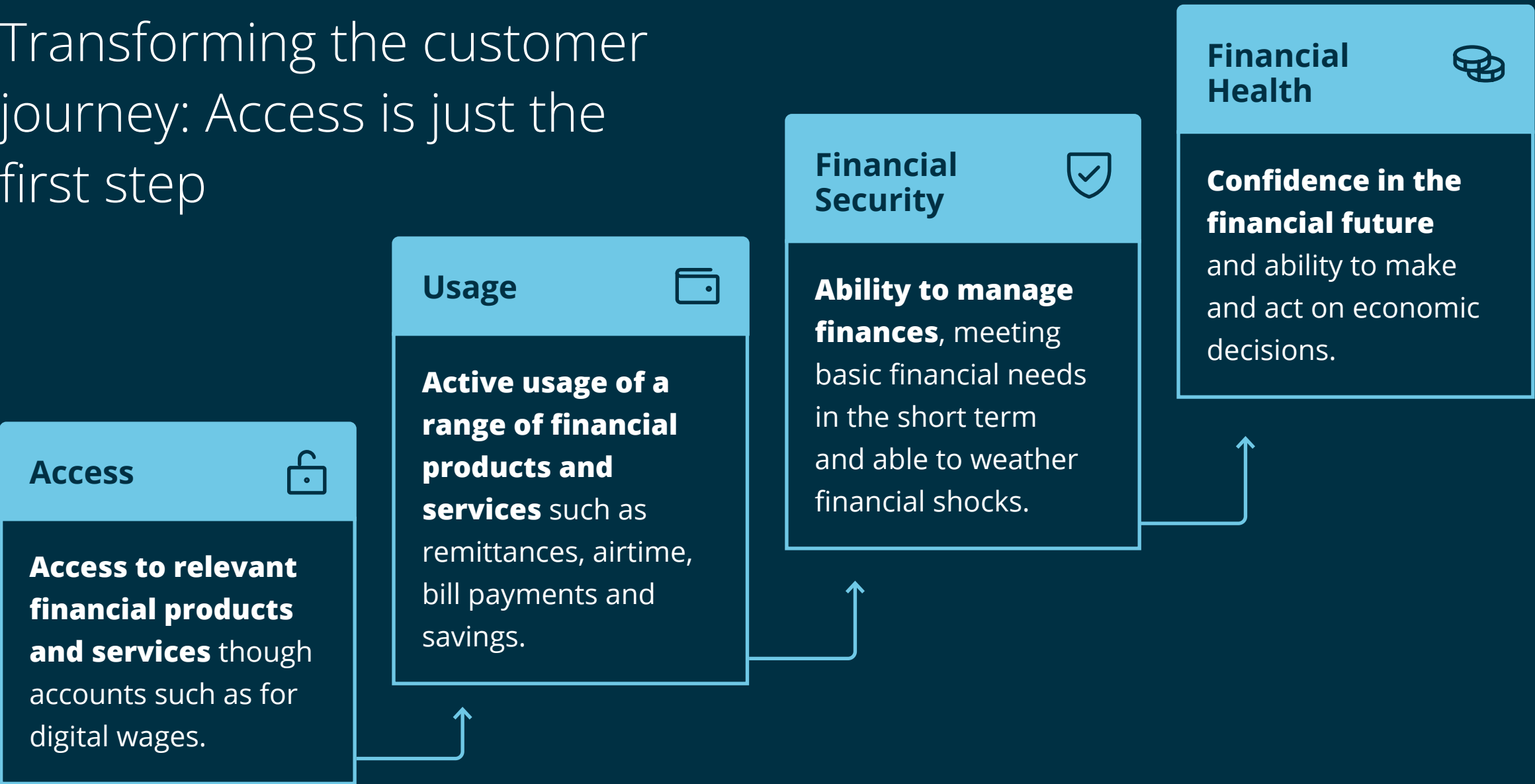
The financial services industry is now starting to set targets for financial inclusion beyond access such as Mastercard's 'One billion and beyond'<sup>10</sup> and this segment can represent significant incremental growth in terms of user base and revenue as well as igniting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) progress contributing to company Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) commitments.

This guide sets out recommendations that financial service providers can leverage to unlock the potential gains from this segment and help bring millions of garment workers into the digital economy. It uses insights gathered through the RISE partnership with Mastercard, working with financial service providers and the garment industry in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Egypt, to increase financial inclusion and improve financial health and resilience for garment workers using wage digitalization as an entry point.

## Garment industry: A significant market segment



## Transforming the customer journey: Access is just the first step



# Opportunity Size

The majority of garment workers are underbanked and conduct most of their financial transactions including payments, saving and remittances in cash. Offering financial accounts could lead to using a range of products and services as workers become more knowledgeable and confident in financial matters.

With 39% of adults in emerging economies opening their first account specifically to receive a wage payment or money from the government,<sup>11</sup> wage digitalization is a valuable entry point to advancing financial inclusion and resilience. With the majority of garment workers being women and women 8% less likely to have an account than men,<sup>12</sup> it is estimated that financial service providers could generate an additional US\$700 billion in revenue globally by providing financial services to women.<sup>13</sup>

RISE is working with Mastercard in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Egypt, Guatemala and Indonesia to accelerate the journey from financial access to financial health for women in the garment sector. These countries typically have a low percentage of the population with financial accounts ranging from 26% to 51% and a high percentage of private sector workers paid in cash wages, from 63% to 87%.<sup>14</sup>

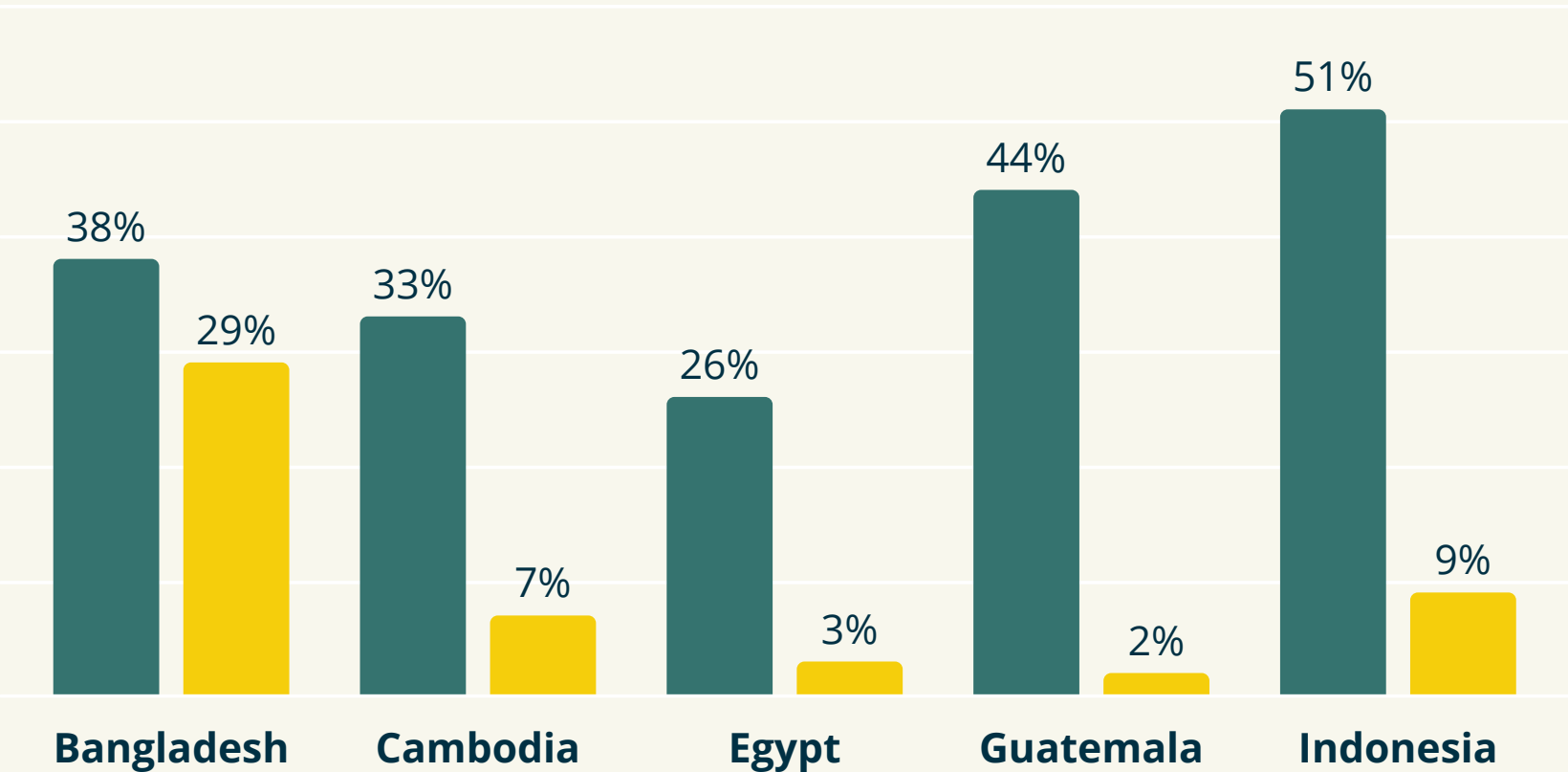
Rates of saving, borrowing, and sending remittances are significantly higher in these countries than the use of financial products and services for the same needs. For example, in Guatemala, 42% of adults reported saving money however only 12% saved in a financial institution. In Cambodia, 50% of adults sent or received a domestic remittance however only 5% did so through an account. World Bank Group Findex data has been used for comparability, however national datasets may provide different results.<sup>15</sup>

Chart data is taken from the World Bank Group Global Findex Database 2021.<sup>16</sup>

## Financial and mobile money accounts

Adults (15+) with financial accounts

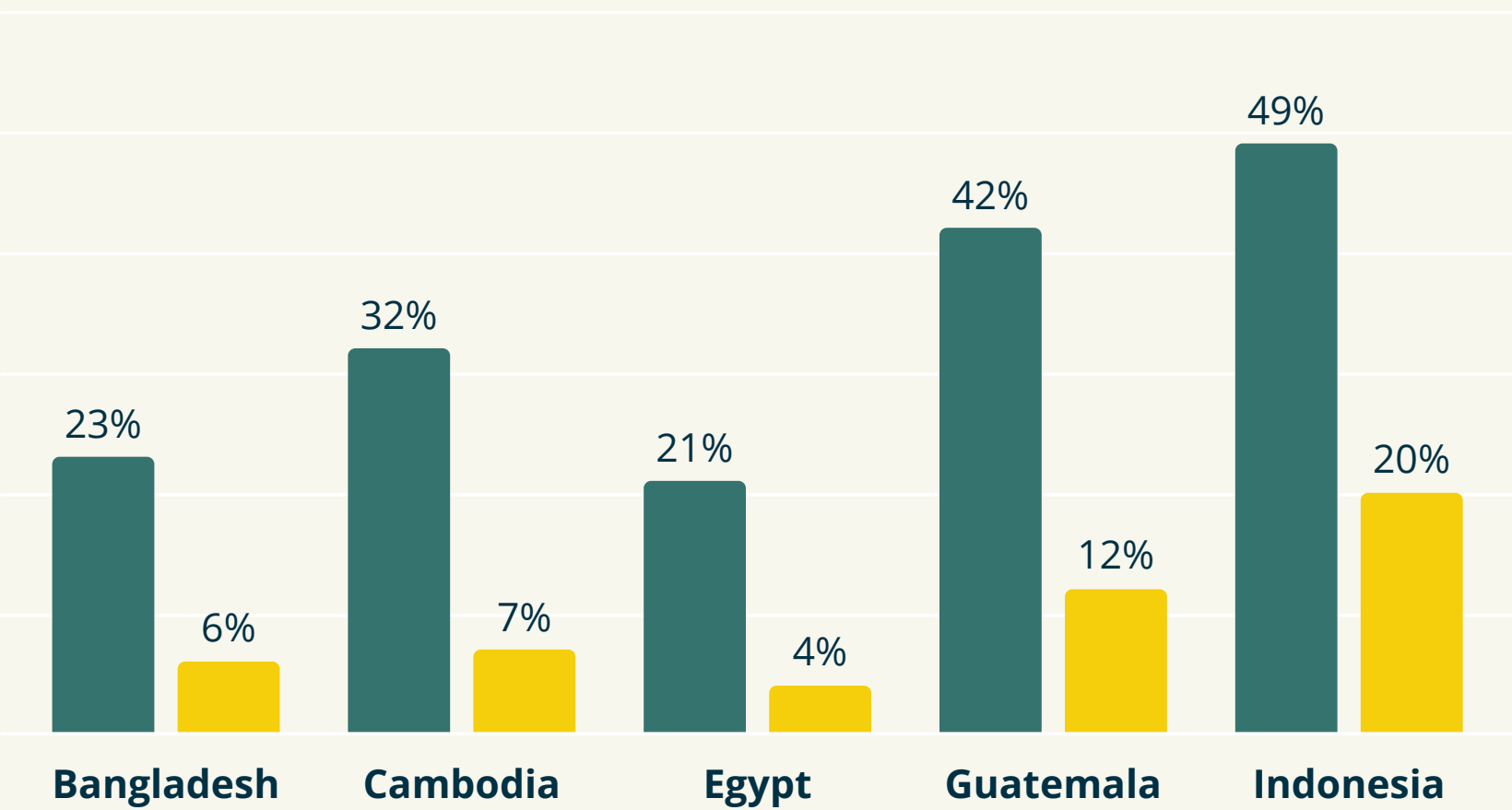
Adults (15+) with mobile money accounts



## Saving money

Adults (15+) saving any money

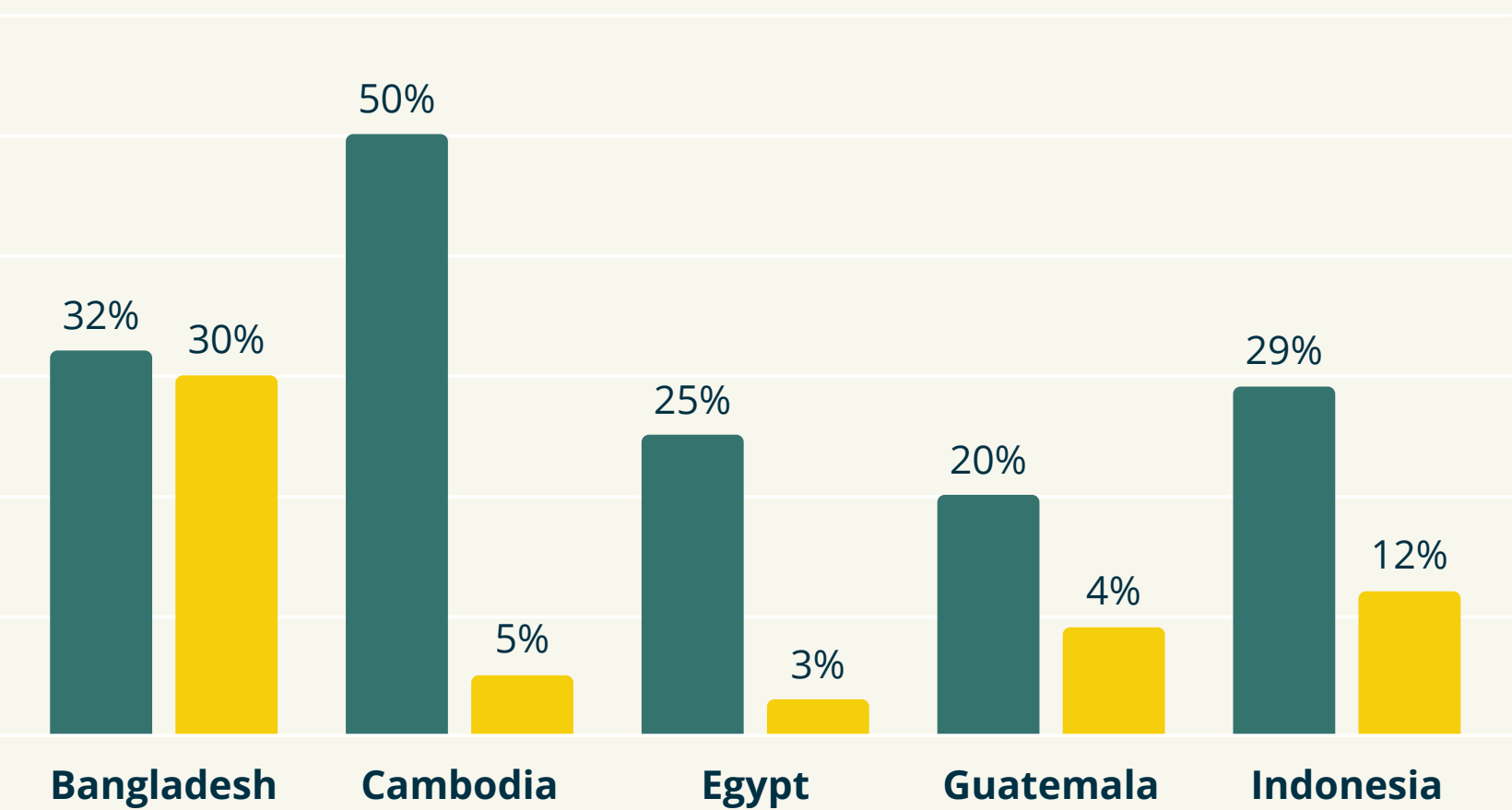
Adults (15+) saving at a financial institution



## Domestic remittances

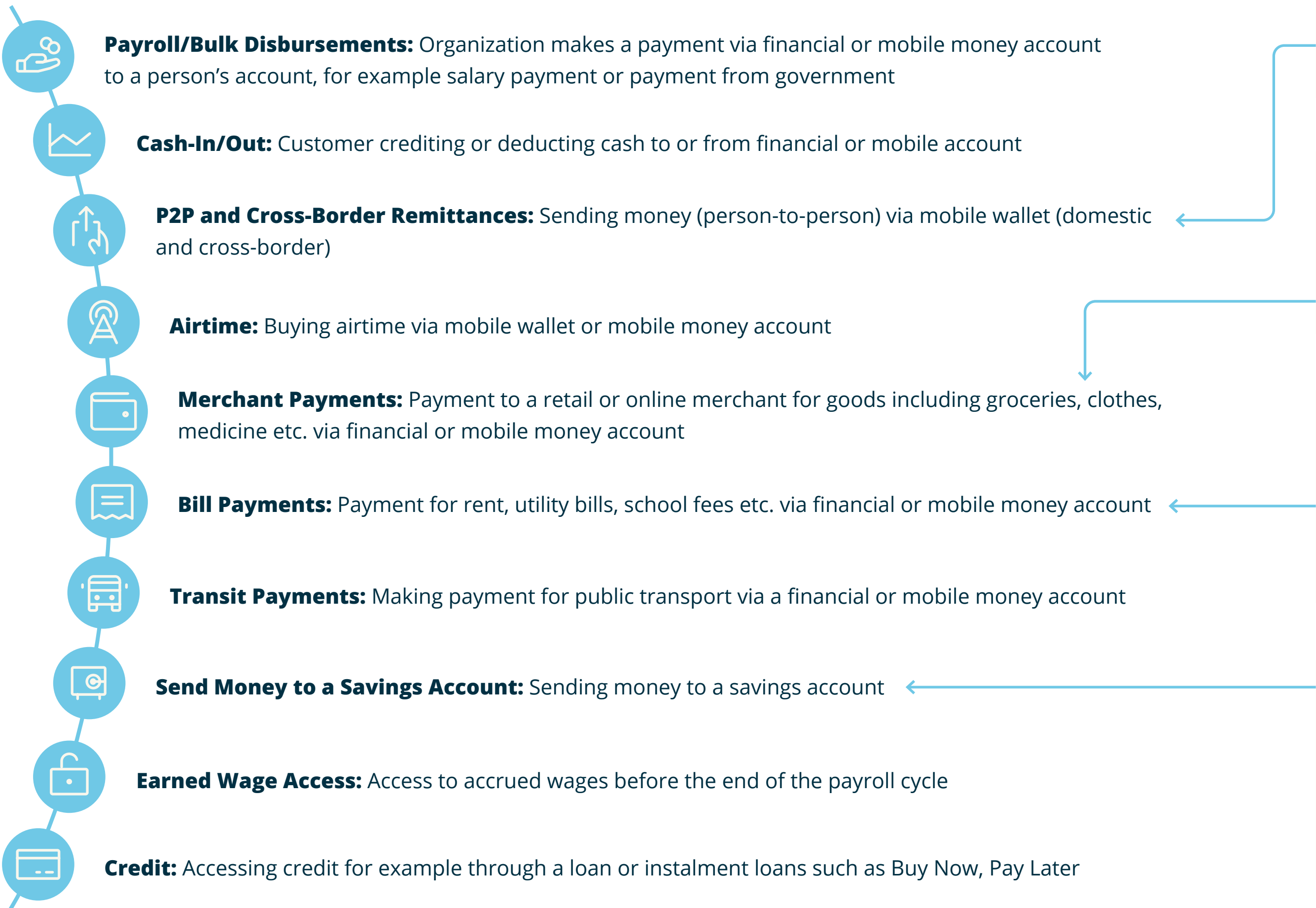
Adults sending / receiving any domestic remittance

Adults sending / receiving any domestic remittance through an account



# Developing Use Cases for Garment Workers

Garment workers conduct a range of financial transactions in cash on a daily basis. Creating affordable and accessible use cases for these transactions can drive usage of digital financial services. For example, in Bangladesh, following training, women workers made eight digital financial transactions a month including to send remittances and to top up airtime. There are numerous use cases relevant for women and men garment workers and opportunity to graduate customers to further products and services as they gain confidence and trust in providers.



**P2P and Cross-Border Remittances:** This is a key use case for garment workers as many have migrated from rural to urban areas or cross-border and need to be able to send and receive money easily and quickly in emergencies. In Bangladesh, women sent an average of **US\$54 per month in digital remittances**. If all four million garment workers in Bangladesh were paid into accounts, a potential total of US\$199 million (17.4 billion Taka) could be sent each month in remittances.<sup>17</sup>



**Merchant Payments:** This use case is important for garment workers as household and personal goods represent a high percentage of their spend. When workers can reliably make these payments digitally, they are less likely to withdraw cash. In Cambodia, workers are more comfortable using **QR codes to pay rather than using debit cards**.<sup>18</sup>



**Bill Payments:** Workers often take a lot of time to pay bills in cash as they need to be done in person. Paying for bills such as utility payments digitally saves time and drives efficiency and transparency in the garment sector where workers would have otherwise had to take time off work to pay them. In Egypt, the number of **workers making digital bill payments has more than doubled** after training on using their accounts.<sup>19</sup>



**Saving Money:** With the right support on budgeting and financial planning, workers start saving. In Cambodia, having somewhere safe to store money and having access to financial tools to support saving has **led to an increase in savings**. Life stage also impacts savings behaviors, and many garment workers are saving for marriage, children's education or to invest in land for their future.<sup>20</sup>



## Potential Impact

RISE has demonstrated that with the right support including financial capability training, workers become active users of and benefit from financial products and services that are relevant and affordable. Financial capability training focuses on equipping workers with the skills, attitudes and trust to be able to interact with financial products and services, making informed financial decisions, leading to improved financial health and wellbeing for workers.

Infographic data is taken from Mastercard analysis of global RISE data from Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia and Vietnam.<sup>21</sup>



91% of women and men workers were paid into accounts, up from 46%. The greatest impact was seen for workers aged 18-24, who had a 64% point increase from being paid cash wages to digital wages.



84% of men and 88% of women had a mobile money account, up from 51% and 47% respectively. The main transactions made on a mobile device were sending remittances, airtime transfer, paying bills and merchant payments.



80% of men and 82% of women reported saving each or most months up from 54% and 57% respectively. 76% of men and 78% of women had a savings account, up from 58% and 57% respectively. Workers under 35 are most likely to save especially workers aged 18-24 who increased their savings the most. 69% of workers saved most of their savings in a savings account, up from 53%.

## Financial capability training increases account usage and financial security

Since 2011, RISE (and founder HERproject) has supported over 382,000 workers (56% women) working in 213 garment factories across ten countries, to increase financial inclusion, including through wage digitalization, and improve financial health and security.

We have demonstrated that **financial capability training is essential to the adoption and safe use of financial products and services** such as payroll accounts or digital financial services. Many workers – especially women – may be unaccustomed to using digital financial services. In addition, they may lack basic familiarity with technology and may have developed a distrust of digital products. Women workers may face additional barriers to accessing and using financial products and services, such as discriminatory social norms or traditions.

We have found that a **‘tech and touch’ approach is an effective way to build workers’ knowledge, skills and confidence** with financial products and services. RISE uses blended learning with in-person trainers and engaging digital tools, including videos and audios, to develop 5% of the workforce as peer educators who then share their learning with 20 other peers.

Training modules include: Intro to Financial Products and Services; Using Digital Financial Services; Financial Planning and Managing Your Money; Budgeting; Savings and Borrowing Responsibly; Talking about Finances with Your Family. See page 16 for links to training resources.

## Three Steps to Develop the Garment Sector Segment

Creating a new market segment requires strategic long-term investment for long-term returns. Shaping strategies to build a commercially viable and responsible model that benefits garment workers is key to success. This guide looks at three steps for financial service providers to develop the garment sector segment.

Step 1

**Acquire** new customers at scale through responsible wage digitalization in global supply chains

Step 2

**Drive** account usage of a range of financial products and services

Step 3

**Expand** product offering to build financial security

## Acquire new customers at scale

With many garment workers concentrated in large workplace settings and easy to access through payroll, responsible wage digitalization is an important foundational use case for financial service providers to broaden their offering to the garment segment.



**Develop use case for payroll digitalization** including the business benefits from transitioning from cash to digital wages in driving efficiency and demonstrating compliance. Employers in Cambodia reported an 84% reduction in admin costs dedicated to preparing and disbursing payroll and saved an average of 15 mins production time per worker on payday.<sup>22</sup> 79% of global buyers surveyed think digital wages are helpful in meeting their social and labor compliance requirements.<sup>23</sup>



**Understand the customer journey and their unique needs and challenges through user-centred design** to ensure solutions will be relevant and accessible. It is important to understand local contexts, social norms, and the specific needs of women. For example, they may lack basic familiarity with technology and financial services and may not have the resources to open and use an account such as an ID card, smart phone, or SIM registered in their own name.



**Take a long-term approach** to realize lasting benefits for customers and providers. For example, workers need to be able to withdraw cash from local ATMs as they build their trust and confidence to use digital financial services and reduce the need to cash out. It is recommended to ensure that cashing out services are available through ATMs or agents in industrial areas and garment worker communities. This could include mobile ATMs provided around payday.



**Identify opportunities for interoperability** of platforms and agents to increase usage of financial products and services. Consider issuing open-loop cards to enable more opportunities to use financial products and services in the medium term.

## Build trust and reputation through strong customer service

The initial interaction between workers and financial service providers and ongoing customer care provided is crucial. **A positive user experience creates a customer for life.** Trust can be compromised if customer service is difficult to access (eg only during working hours) or slow to deal with queries, potentially leading factories to switch payroll providers in response to worker complaints. Easily accessible and free customer support is fundamental for workers.

**Understanding customer needs is vital to building trust**, ensuring customers are satisfied, stay engaged and remain loyal to their provider. If customers have trouble cashing out due to queues or not enough cash in the machine, resetting their pin number or have their card swallowed at an ATM without straightforward and quick resolution, they lose confidence in financial service providers. When workers are not clear on fees charged or incur unexpected charges, for example for paper statements because they do not have an email address, they become frustrated. Moreover, agents promoting credit card applications **without adequately explaining fees** or distinguishing them from debit cards can also undermine trust.

**Awareness campaigns on fraud prevention** such as being able to identify scam calls and texts are essential to ensure workers can safely manage their accounts. Workers also like **confirmation that they have been paid** into their account such as through an SMS. This reduces demand on ATMs from people going to check whether they have been paid. It is not recommended to include the amount paid in the SMS which may be seen by other family members with access to the phone.



## Drive account usage

As workers build their knowledge, confidence and trust with basic financial services, with the right support, they will start to use a range of products and services that are relevant and affordable. Workers' use of services will continue to evolve over time as their financial needs change.



**Develop use cases beyond basic access** which should be relevant and affordable to workers and easy to use (see page 6 for examples). For instance, many are migrant workers who regularly send money home, making peer-to-peer (P2P) payments and remittances essential use cases to consider. Taking into account different levels of mobile technology is vital as not all workers have smartphones or SIM cards registered in their own name. Payment preference is also key, for example in Cambodia, workers often trust QR codes more than debit cards. Ensuring bill payment is safe and straightforward will save workers time and avoid work absences to pay bills in cash.



**Provide product information and training that is clear and accessible to garment workers,** building workers' knowledge and confidence to replace cash transactions with digital ones and use a range of financial solutions relevant to them. Ensuring any fees associated with products are clearly advertised is key to building trust. RISE has developed a range of training tools including videos, audio messages and posters aimed at garment workers (see page 16).



**Support increased digital payment acceptance by merchants** through low-cost acceptance solution and working with fast-moving consumer good clients to support digitalization of retail payments in their supply chains. Incentivizing digital payments and acceptance can be done through appropriate discounts and bonus points through SMS promotion.



**Collect disaggregated data** to understand and periodically review what barriers exist for men and women using a range of financial products and services. Consider other segments and corresponding barriers such as age and marital status.

## How financial service providers can maximize success by understanding the unique constraints women face

IFC research has found that financial service providers who tailor products and services towards women report **higher lifetime value** despite occasional higher acquisition costs.<sup>24</sup> They also found that women are more **loyal, less risky and more or equally valuable** customers, when compared to men. Yet in parts of South Asia, the Middle East and Africa, men are 13 to 20 percentage points more likely to have an account than women.<sup>25</sup> Understanding women as customers is crucial to closing this gap and serving them more effectively.<sup>26</sup>

**Women, who make up the majority of garment workers,** face unique challenges in transitioning to digital wages compared to their male counterparts, such as lower levels of education, experience and confidence with financial services and technology. These mean **women often require more support** to access resources needed to open and use accounts effectively.<sup>27</sup> Working with peer champions can be an effective way to deliver this support.

In addition, social norms on financial decision-making impact how women use financial products and services. Women **hiding cash wages for personal use**, where they are expected to hand over their wages to their father or husband, can be exposed through the **greater transparency** from being paid into a digital account.<sup>28</sup> To increase their acquisition of female account holders, financial service providers need to identify any potential **unintended consequences** as part of developing and promoting financial products and services.



## Expand product offering

As garment workers' financial needs continue to evolve, ongoing effort and investment into product innovation and promoting ecosystem growth is key to retaining customers and enhancing their financial security and resilience.



**Diversify financial products and services** to meet customer needs and technological advancements such as more secure digital payments, savings products and remittance solutions. Savings in particular are important to support employees to manage their spending as there can be unintended consequences of offering some products such as credit that they may not be able to pay back.



**Support workers' financial security** including providing access to training and materials on financial planning, budgeting and saving to support workers' ability to save and manage financial shocks.



**Use in-app money management tools** to support workers to keep track of their finances, manage bills and create saving goals. Gamification and nudges around payday on budgeting and saving to guide users to beneficial actions are a helpful tool which have been found to foster sustainable financial behavior.



**Support customers to adopt more advanced products** such as investments and insurance, building financial resilience and helping them weather longer term financial shocks and plan for the future. Deposit schemes can be helpful products for workers to build long-term savings. For example in Bangladesh following participation in RISE training 21% of men and 16% of women used a recurring deposit account for their savings.

## Take a savings approach

Workers with bank accounts are **more likely to save or store money regularly** for saving goals such as for unexpected emergencies, children's education, and buying a house, property or land. Women with accounts are more likely to save regularly than men.

Financial capability training focused on financial planning and managing finances is key to **supporting workers to prioritise saving**, meaning they are better prepared to cope with financial shocks and plan for the future.

Encouraging customers to set savings goals through incentives can foster engagement and loyalty, driving customers towards financial success whilst **boosting deposits for greater revenue** for financial service providers. Also, studies have shown that turning long-term savings goals into a game can increase consumer financial wellbeing, increasing their ability to achieve savings goals by almost 20 percent.<sup>29</sup>

We have seen that with the right support, **81% of workers save regularly**, with women more likely to save than men and under 35s most likely to save than any other age group.<sup>30</sup>



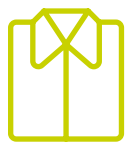
# Improve Financial Health Through Collaboration

Moving from financial access to health requires a diverse set of capabilities, continuous innovation and cross-sector collaboration. With so many organizations committed to supporting inclusive digital payment ecosystems, including through the UN-based Better Than Cash Alliance,<sup>31</sup> there are opportunities to learn from each other and build on progress to date to better target and scale efforts.

Financial service providers have worked with Mastercard, TAFTAC, ILO, Better Factories Cambodia and RISE to support the scale up of responsible wage digitalization across Cambodia’s garment, footwear and travel goods sector.<sup>32</sup> In 2018, approximately 22% of the sector were paid digital wages and in 2024 this has increased to 72%.<sup>33</sup> In Egypt, Commercial International Bank and Mastercard worked together with Levi Strauss & Co and RISE to pilot wage digitization at a Levi’s supplier resulting in over 8,000 workers being paid into accounts.<sup>34</sup>

Forming complementary partnerships between financial service providers and ecosystem stakeholders can help to address barriers to enhancing financial health, including social norms that affect decision making on spending and saving wages, enabling workers to achieve their full financial potential.

**Financial service providers should consider working with:**



## Global Garment Industry

Work with global brands, buyers, suppliers and manufacturing organizations to identify opportunities to facilitate and promote wage digitalization and digital supply chain payments and address challenges.



## Telcos

Partner with telcos to promote access to affordable smart phones and support SIM card ownership/ registration.



## Governments

Work with governments to support and scale commitments to digitalize payments across private sector/ social protection payments including barriers to interoperability.



## NGOs

Partner with NGOs to increase understanding of financial needs of garment workers and access support on training.



## Multinational Organizations and Funders

Work with multinational organizations and funding agencies to leverage global expertise and explore risk sharing.



## Financial Service Providers and Fintech Companies

Work with other financial service providers and fintech companies to promote ecosystem and product development, improve interoperability, and promote financial health of customers.



## Case Study: Bangladesh

There are an estimated 4 million garment workers in Bangladesh, of which more than 50% are women. Only 38% of adults have a financial institution account, with 45% of men having an account compared to only 31% of women.<sup>35</sup> Many workers continue to be paid in cash and are underbanked meaning they have no or limited access to financial products and services and struggle to manage their finances.

In 2020, the Government of Bangladesh, with support from the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), included wage digitalization as a channel to deliver the COVID-19 stimulus package for garment sector workers.<sup>36</sup> As a result, nearly 2 million workers (44% of the total workforce) were paid into digital accounts (up from 28% before the pandemic).<sup>37</sup> However, once the stimulus package ended, around 25% of garment factory employees reverted to cash payments.<sup>38</sup> This shift occurred partly because workers had not received training on using their accounts and lacked confidence in using ATMs or making payments, particularly affecting women.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, Bangladesh's wider digital payment infrastructure had not yet evolved, so workers still needed cash for their everyday transactions.

RISE founder HERproject, in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have been working together in Bangladesh to support and scale context specific wage digitalization in the garment sector. Employers receive guidance and advice on digitalizing their payroll while ensuring the specific needs of women workers are considered. Workers receive financial capability training, supporting them to build the knowledge and confidence needed to use and benefit from their new payroll accounts.

The partnership supported 70 garment factories to digitalize their wages, enabling workers to access, use and benefit from their accounts.<sup>40</sup>

- **91% of workers (150,000 people, 58% women) were paid into a digital account**, up from only 19% before the program. For the majority, this was their first financial account.
- **Workers became active users of their accounts** with women conducting eight transactions a month and men 13 transactions. Most popular transactions were to send digital remittances (approx. \$54 per month by women) and topping up airtime (Women spend 203 taka (US\$2.34) on airtime each month and men 313 taka (US\$3.62)).<sup>41</sup>
- **Communities surrounding digitalized factories became active mobile money account users** at a higher rate than in areas around factories still paying cash wages (an 11 percentage point increase in active users, versus a 2 percentage point increase) including non-garment workers.<sup>42</sup> This ripple effect points to an incentive for financial services providers to continue investing in this market segment in and around the garment industry.
- **71% of workers (women and men) reported saving regularly (up from 50%)**. Workers were saving to buy a house, property or land, to start a business and for their children's education.
- **59% decrease in admin time dedicated to preparing and disbursing payroll**. Employers reported saving on the cost of transporting cash and on the time to count, batch and distribute cash by managers.

"I didn't know how to use [mobile money] until we had the [HERfinance] training. Through this, we were able to learn how to use our account—cash out, top up airtime—and about savings. I can be more responsible with money now. Before, on payday, when I had cash in my pocket, I wanted to buy things on the way home. I won't be tempted now. Instead, I can save some of my wages in my mobile money account and can earn interest."

**MOSHREFA, GARMENT WORKER, BANGLADESH**

Garment workers conduct

**8-13**

**transactions a month**  
following wage digitalization  
and financial capability  
training



**\$54**



**sent per month**  
by women garment  
workers as digital  
remittances

Women in digitalized  
neighbourhoods were

**2.5x**

**more likely**  
to actively use  
a mobile account





# Case Study: Cambodia

In Cambodia, the garment sector provides around 1 million workers with formal jobs, 80% of whom are women.<sup>43</sup> While these jobs offer a regular income, many workers are underbanked which makes it difficult to manage their finances, limiting saving ability. There are also high levels of indebtedness.<sup>44,45</sup>

The momentum for digitalizing payroll is growing in the garment sector and is facilitated by a dynamic financial sector that is quickly expanding its outreach, including through digital technologies. It is estimated that around 72% of the sector has digitalized wages, up from 22% in 2018.<sup>46</sup> However, workers still need support to be able to use and benefit from their payroll accounts, otherwise they will simply withdraw 100% of wages on payday.

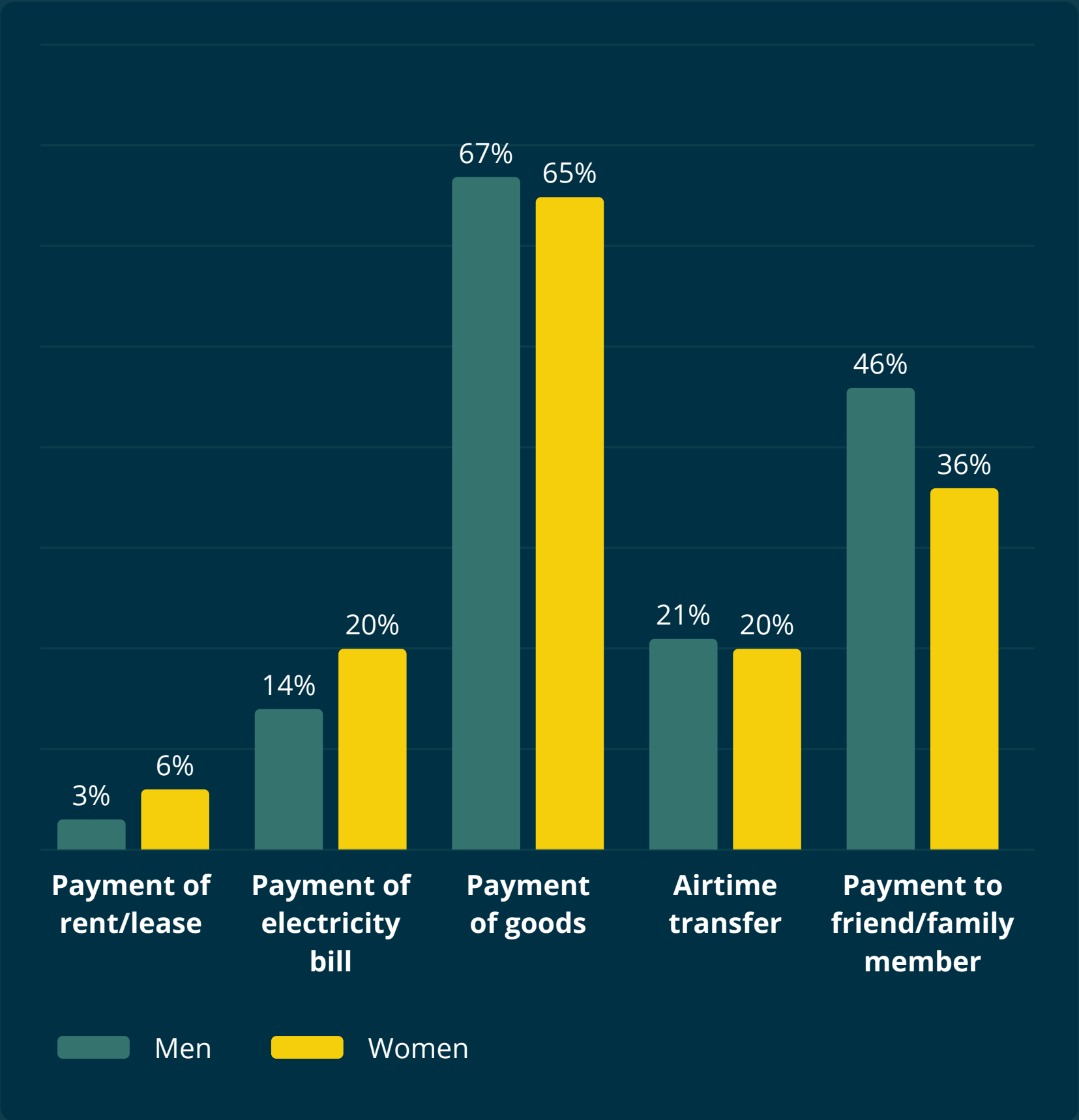
RISE and Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth have been working together in Cambodia since 2019 to support and scale context specific wage digitalization in the garment sector. Employers receive guidance and advice on digitalizing their payroll while ensuring the specific needs of women workers are considered. Workers receive financial capability training, supporting them to build the knowledge and confidence needed to use and benefit from their new payroll accounts. The partnership has supported 17 garment factories with 26,573 workers (85% women) which led to<sup>47</sup>:

- **90% of workers (women and men) using mobile money accounts** (up from 35%) for merchant payments, remittances, topping up airtime and paying bills.
- **83% of women saving regularly** (up from 45%) including for expected expenses (eg. medical bills, household items), for emergencies, and to buy a house, property or land.
- **80% of women reported confidence to manage a financial emergency** in the next 2 years (up from 55%).
- **84% reduction in admin costs of preparing and disbursing payroll.** Employers reported saving on the cost of transporting cash and on the time to count, batch and distribute cash by managers.

“I am paid into a bank account which I prefer to cash. [Following training] I've learnt to use my account to pay for online shopping, now I buy my children's clothes online – it's much more convenient. I've also started saving 10 USD each month. I transfer it to my savings account. I feel more confident now about my future expense – if someone is sick then I have savings to pay the hospital bill.”

**CHAMPI, WOMEN GARMENT WORKER,  
PHNOM PENH**

Types of mobile money transactions made by workers in Cambodia following participation in the RISE program<sup>48</sup>





# Case Study: Egypt

The garment industry in Egypt provides around 2.5 million workers<sup>49</sup> with access to formal employment, 40% of whom are women. Many workers receive their wages in cash and don't have a bank account. Only 26% of adults in Egypt have a financial institution account<sup>50</sup> meaning it is difficult for them to manage their finances.

Initiatives from the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) promoting digital payments and financial inclusion mean that traditional banks are embracing innovative solutions like mobile banking and digital wallets. While digital payments are becoming more and more popular, workers still struggle to trust using their money in the digital economy and with 72% of the population having access to the internet, wage digitalization has huge potential to increase financial inclusion and improved garment workers' financial health.

RISE and Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth have been working together in Egypt since 2019 to support and scale context specific wage digitalization in the garment sector. Employers receive guidance and advice on digitalizing their payroll while ensuring the specific needs of women workers are considered. Workers receive financial capability training, supporting them to build the knowledge and confidence needed to use and benefit from their new payroll accounts.

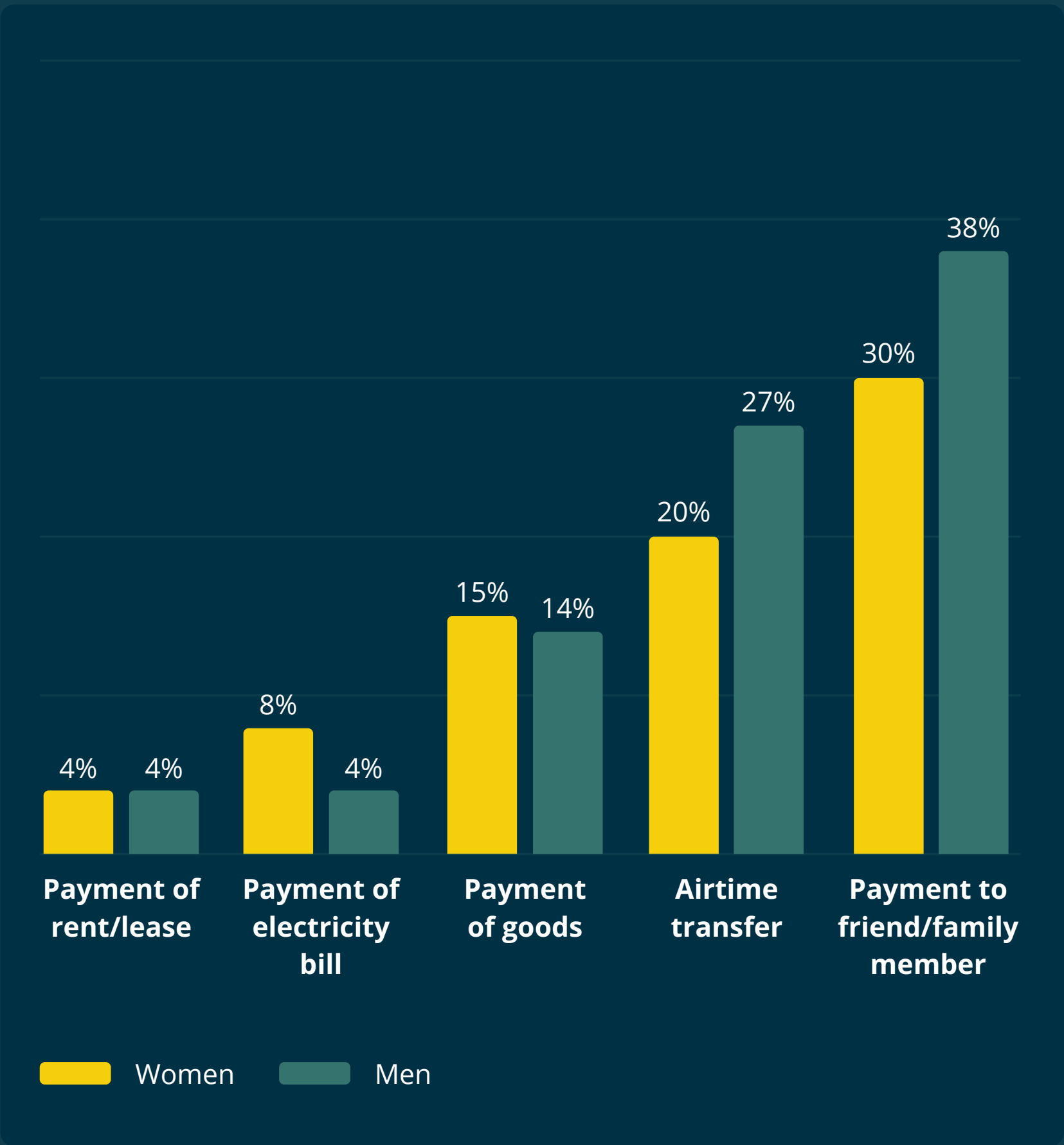
The partnership has supported 9 garment factories in 5 governorates with over 24,000 workers (43% women, 56% under 35) enabling workers to access, use and benefit from their accounts.<sup>51</sup>

- **93% of workers were paid into a digital account.** 64% of men and women preferred to be paid digitally (up from 30%). Main reasons cited included it being safer, easier to manage their money, transfer money and save.
- **40% of workers using mobile money accounts** (up from 15%) including for merchant payments, sending remittances, topping up airtime and paying bills.
- **63% of workers saving regularly** (up from 48%) including for marriage, children's education, expected expenses (such as medical bills, household items, personal expenses), and emergencies. 65% of workers reported having a separate account for their savings (up from 37%).
- **53% reduction in admin costs dedicated to preparing and disbursing payroll.** Employers reported saving on the cost of transporting cash and on the time to count, batch and distribute cash by managers.

"I am paid my wages into an account. I was nervous at first, but now I prefer to be paid into an account as it helps me manage my money better. I spend less when I don't have cash in my pocket and I only cash out what I need. I find it difficult to save so I have joined a *gam'eya* to help me save. Before I was spending a lot on shopping and clothes. I am now saving for my marriage."

**FATMA, GARMENT WORKER, EGYPT**

Types of mobile money transactions made by workers in Egypt following participation in the RISE program<sup>52</sup>

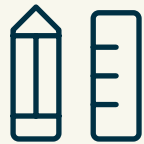




Financial Inclusion and  
Resilience Resources

RISE has developed financial health training resources with Mastercard which are open-source and readily available online. Other useful resources are included from Better Than Cash Alliance and ILO.

RISE Digital Wages Toolkit  
for Employers



Sets out best practice and guidance for managers to transition towards digital payroll in a responsible and efficient manner. Available online in Arabic, Bangla, English, Khmer, and Mandarin.



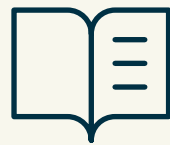
RISE Videos and  
Animation



A set of 6 videos and animation developed with QuizRR to support workers to increase their knowledge of financial services, improve financial health and build their digital literacy. They can be used during training or shown on their own, such as in factory canteens. Playlist available in Arabic, Bangla, Khmer and Vietnamese.



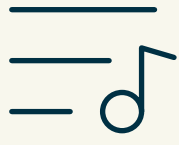
UN Principles for  
Responsible Digital  
Payments



Better than Cash Alliance set out nine good practices for engaging with clients who are sending or receiving digital payments and who have previously been financially excluded or underserved.



RISE Audio Messages



A series of 5 audio messages about financial services and money management are available in Arabic, Bangla, Hindi, Kanada, and Tamil.



RISE Financial Health  
Posters



A set of six posters with information about financial services and management. Available online in Arabic English, Bangla, Khmer, Hindi, Kanada, and Tamil.



ILO Global Center on  
Digital Wages for Decent  
Work



Shares reports and resources to support the transition from cash to responsible digital wage payments.





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RISE: Reimagining Industry to Support Equality is an initiative to support collaborative industry action at scale to advance equality in global garment, footwear and home textiles supply chains. RISE brings together the fashion industry’s four largest women’s empowerment programs from BSR’s HERProject, GAP Inc. P.A.C.E, CARE and Better Work with 15+ years’ experience of implementing women’s empowerment programs in global supply chains to build from proven approaches. RISE focuses on three interconnected priorities with the potential to create transformational improvements in the lives of women workers and support improved business outcome including financial health, prevention of violence and harassment in the world of work, advancement and leadership.

[riseequal.org](http://riseequal.org)