



Women's financial inclusion: What are the missing pieces of the puzzle?

MSC Strategic insights # 4

The gender gap in financial inclusion is more nuanced than it appears, and the existing data is not granular enough for effective decision-making

Globally, **65%** of women aged 15+ years are financially included—more than ever before. Yet the gender gap persists.

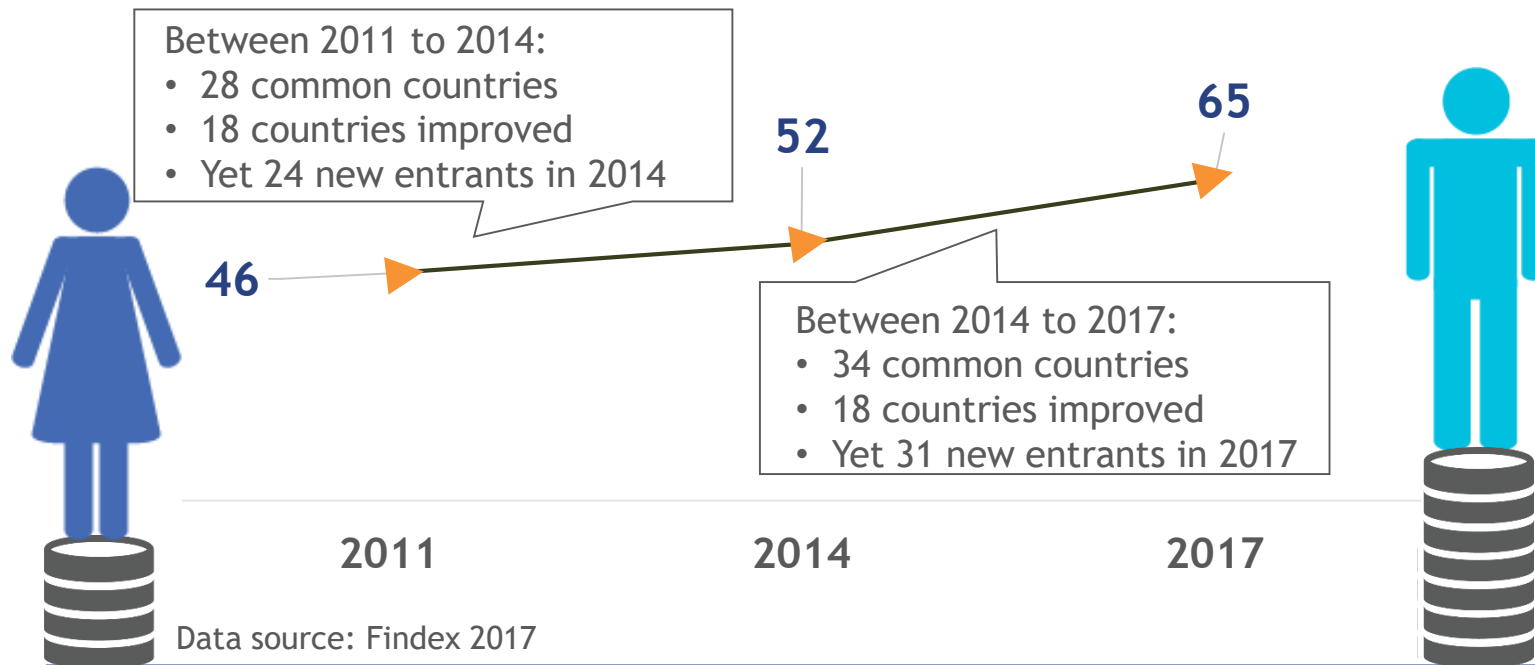
7% gender gap in account ownership (2017)

8.6% gender gap in DFS usage (2017)

The number of countries with over 7 percentage points gender gap in account ownership has been increasing over the years

N=159 countries

(also see Annexure 1)

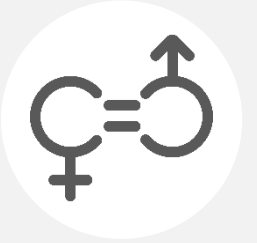


Gender-disaggregated data for policy and business decisions remains inadequate.

- ▶ Most policymakers and providers have only recently started to conduct gender-disaggregated data analysis.
- ▶ Currently, there is a dearth of data on the frequency, volume, and purpose of use of financial services by women.

The increasing gender gap shows that a generic approach to financial inclusion does not work for women

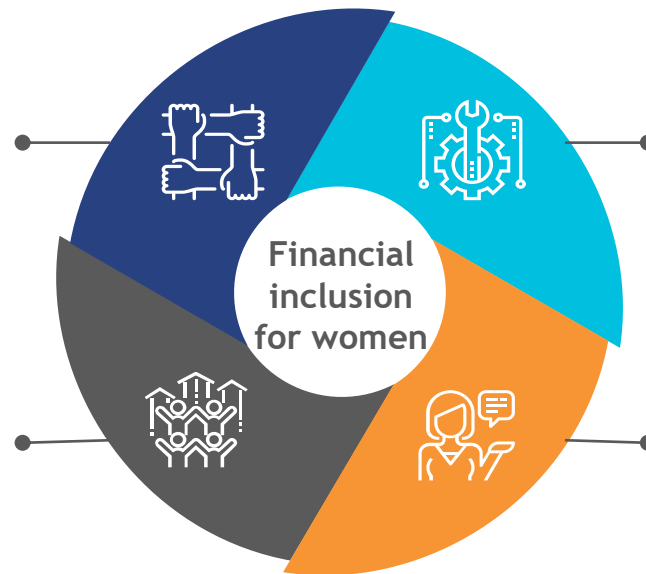
- There is no “gender centrality” in most national policies or strategies on financial inclusion. Goals and objectives are not drafted specifically for women—beyond targets.
- Products and policies often ignore the importance of behavioral differences amongst different sub-segments of women.



The interplay of four key interdependent factors is often overlooked while designing products and programs. This results in design gaps and the unintended exclusion of certain segments of women.

1. **Awareness and capability:** how well women understand and use financial services

3. **Social norms:** which social norms define the use of financial services and how they influence their use

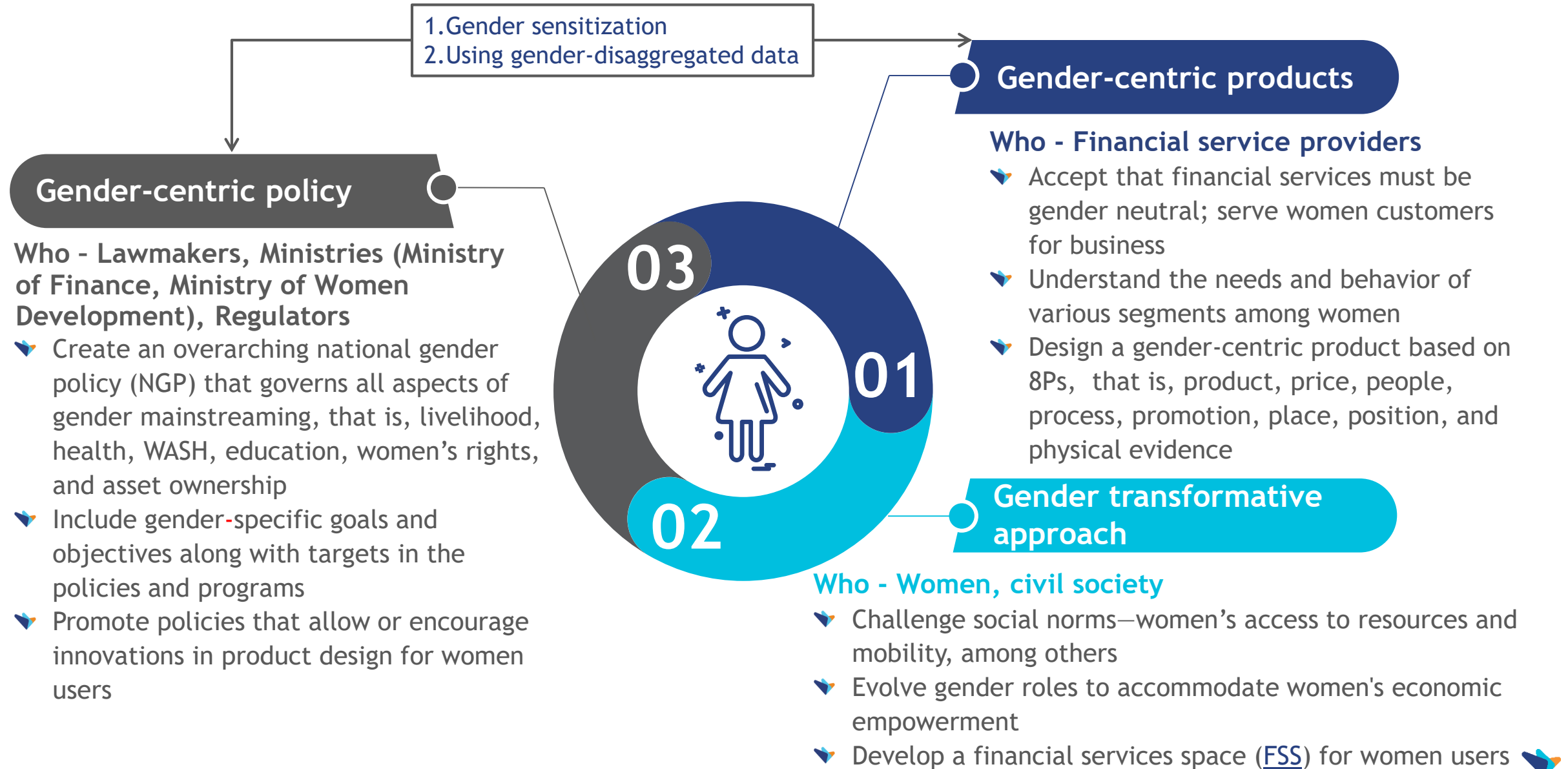


2. **Experience:** how well a woman interacts with products and services

4. **Financial life:** how the ownership of financial resources influences their use

Gender Centrality Framework, MSC, 2018

We need new paradigms for women's financial inclusion

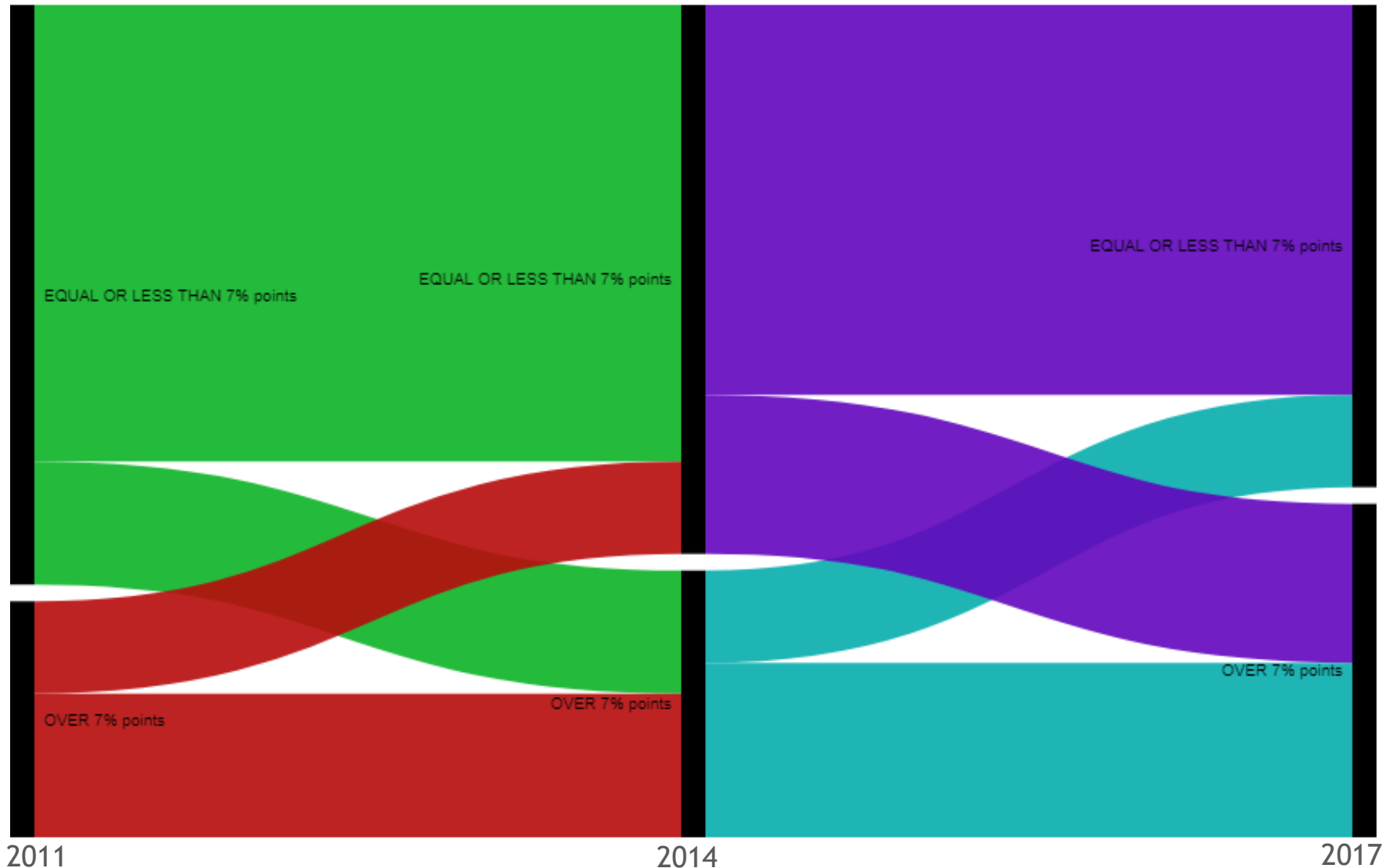


A photograph of two women wearing headscarves. The woman on the left is wearing a purple headscarf and is holding a blue smartphone. The woman on the right is wearing a green and black patterned headscarf with a yellow flower design. They are both looking down at a pink sheet of paper held by the woman on the right. The background is a grey, textured wall.

Annexures

- ▶ **Annexure 1:** Performance of countries fluctuates over time
- ▶ **Annexure 2:** Design to realize gender equality

Annexure 1: Over the years, the performance of countries fluctuates in terms of the gender gap in account ownership



- The height of the black bars (two black bars each at 2011, 2014 and 2017) represents the number of countries with a gender gap in account ownership as less than or equal to 7% points and over 7% points.
- 22 countries persistently maintained the gender gap above 7% points from 2011 to 2014.
- There are new entrants in the high gender gap (over 7% points) group in both 2014 and 2017.
- Some countries that had high (over 7% points) gender gap in 2011 and 2014 have improved their status in 2014 and 2017 respectively.

Design to realize gender equality

Enhancing opportunities for women, worldwide



The challenge and opportunity

- Program designs fail to incorporate all factors that surround women adequately. This may affect a program's theory of change or results framework adversely.
- Products and delivery channels are either biased towards one gender (typically males) or are largely gender-agnostic or both.
- There are not many gender-disaggregated insights that can lead to the identification of factors that have an impact on gender parity.

Our approach

- Our approaches are based on decades of experience in understanding the needs of women at the bottom of the pyramid.
- We have access to a network of gender experts across the globe.
- We employ context-specific use of gender frameworks:
 - Harvard framework;
 - Moser framework;
 - Longwe framework;
 - GEM framework.
- We use our in-house [MI4ID](#) approach: Market Insights for Innovation & Design.
- As part of all of our research, we consciously collect gender disaggregated data.

MSC offers

- An extensive understanding of the lives and needs of women from low- and middle-income households across Asia and Africa
- Assessment of the gender-centrality of products, channels, and programs
- Rigorously designed research, assessments, and analytics that generate insights on the lives, needs, and requirements of women
- Monitoring and evaluation of social development programs through a gender lens

Clients and partners



and many more...



We believe that focusing on two critical aspects—women's access to financial services and women's participation in economic activities—can have a ripple effect in other aspects of gender inequality like health, education, and social status of women, among others.

Our impact

- Designed over 50 women-centric products for various donors, impact investors, and financial service providers across Asia and Africa, including BMGF, Nike, FINCA, and Save the Children
- Designed gender-centric programs in Asia and Africa for Omidyar Network, Asian Development Bank, BPNG, UNDP, Government of Jharkhand, and OPM
- Designed a livelihood program for women artisans for World Bank, with an impact on over 3,000 lives
- Conducted gender disaggregated data analytics of agent networks in over 11 countries

MSC is recognized as the world's local expert in economic, social, and financial inclusion



International financial, social & economic inclusion consulting firm with **20+** years of experience



180+ staff in **11** offices around the world



Projects in **~50** developing countries

Our impact so far

300+
clients

>750
publications

Assisted development of digital G2P services used by **700 million+** people

Implemented **>750 DFS projects**

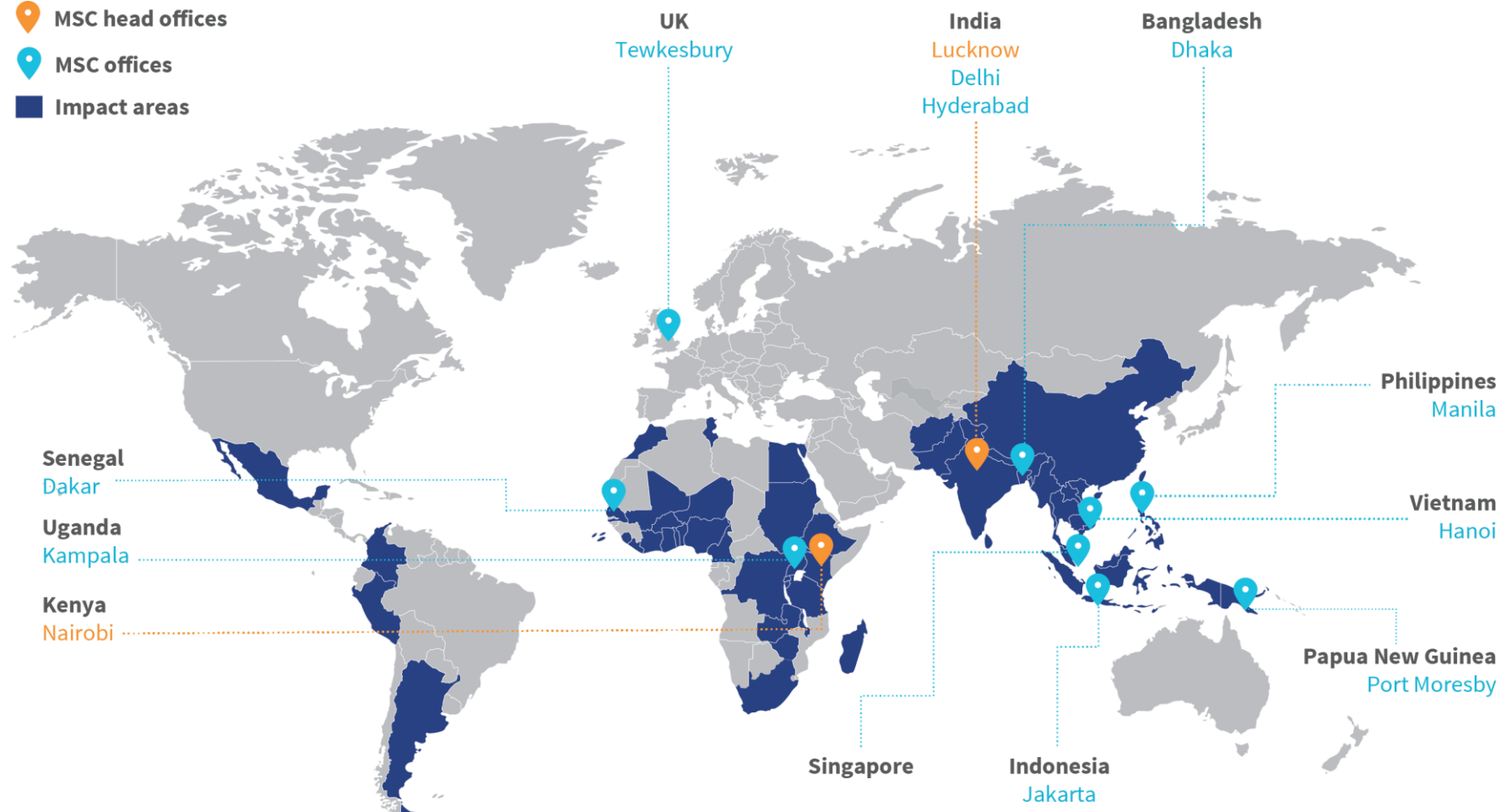
Developed **250+ FI products** and channels now used by **50 million+** people

Trained **8,000+** leading FI specialists globally

Some of our partners and clients



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