



Activity Spotlight and Lessons Learned

Alliance Partner: **DHL**

Dates: **2022-2023**

Program: **Go Global with DHL**

Alliance Series: **MSME capacity-building, inclusive trade**

What was done?

- DHL's Go Global program equipped female entrepreneurs with micro and small firms from Malaysia with essential tools and knowledge to participate in the digital economy and cross-border trade.
- 16 percent of participating MSMEs had prior experience in ecommerce and 5 percent already export.
- The program included training and mentoring components from DHL international specialists as well as a speaker series featuring DHL experts and partners.
- The program's success was amplified through coverage from over 50 media sources.

How was the program designed?

- The Asia Foundation and DHL Express Malaysia and Brunei collaborated to create the DHL Go Global program which aims to build female entrepreneurs' capacity in ecommerce through tailored support and training.
- DHL Go Global program includes the following activities:
 - Tailored curriculum modules (found [here](#))
 - DHL guest speakers' series
 - Complementary multi-modal training
 - E-Commerce: Ready-Set-Go mentoring
 - Accelerated in-person one-day training

Project: Ecommerce training for women-led businesses

Country: Malaysia

Target segments: Women-led MSMEs, of which 97 percent were microenterprises

Outcomes:

- 1,149 women trained virtually
- 117 women trained in-person
- 91 received on-site mentoring.

Impacts: Increased capacity on ecommerce strategy, packaging and logistics, and expanding business abroad

Top Lesson:

Ensure appropriate readiness and fit by explicitly communicating program value proposition

Keys for impact:

- Courses tailored to firms' e-commerce readiness
- Strong trainer-participant relationship





I. Participants

Considering participant literacy levels, availability, and business needs, the Asia Foundation designed and streamlined learning modules provided by DHL Malaysia to equip participants with necessary tools and knowledge to participate in ecommerce and cross-border trade.

Out of the 1,250 applicants that the course attracted, **1,149 participants**, mostly microenterprises, completed training sessions between August and September 2022, across a diverse range of sectors and geographies (figures 1-2). Most MSMEs had limited experience in ecommerce or exporting (figures 3 and 4). For firms without prior experience in ecommerce, 33% of firms with 5 or fewer employees and 38% of firms with 5-50 employees reported plans of entering the field in the near-term.

Figure 1 – Participants by sector and firm size

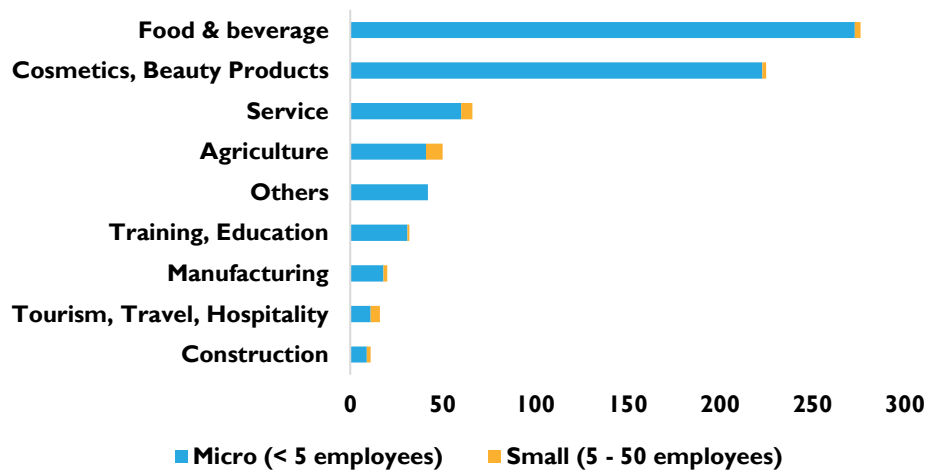


Figure 2 - Participants by State and firm size

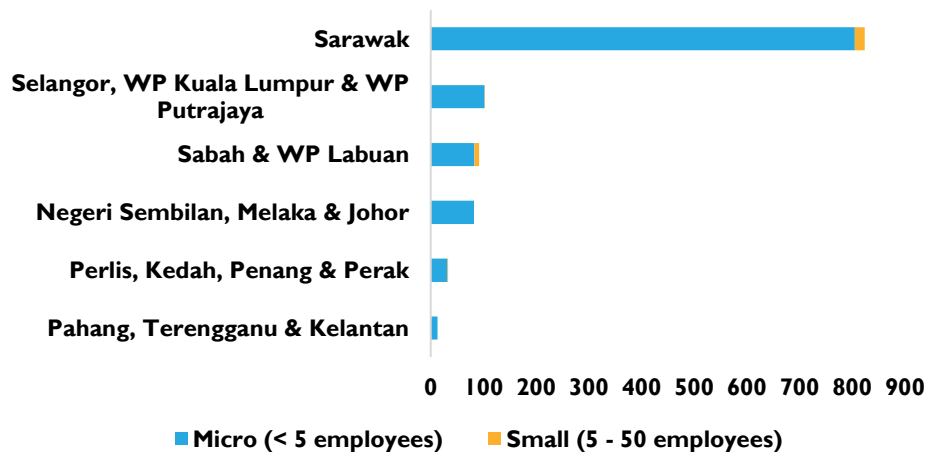




Figure 3 – Participating firms’ experience with e-commerce

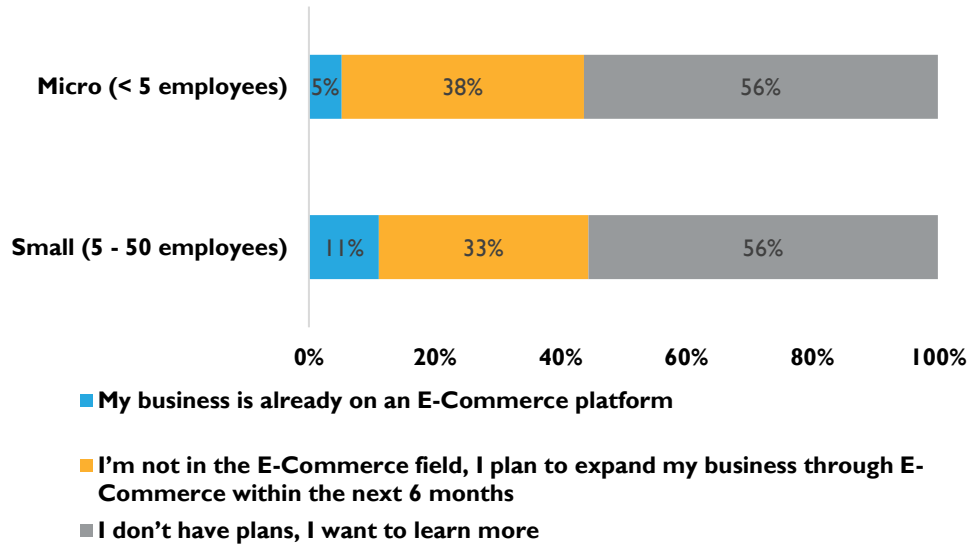
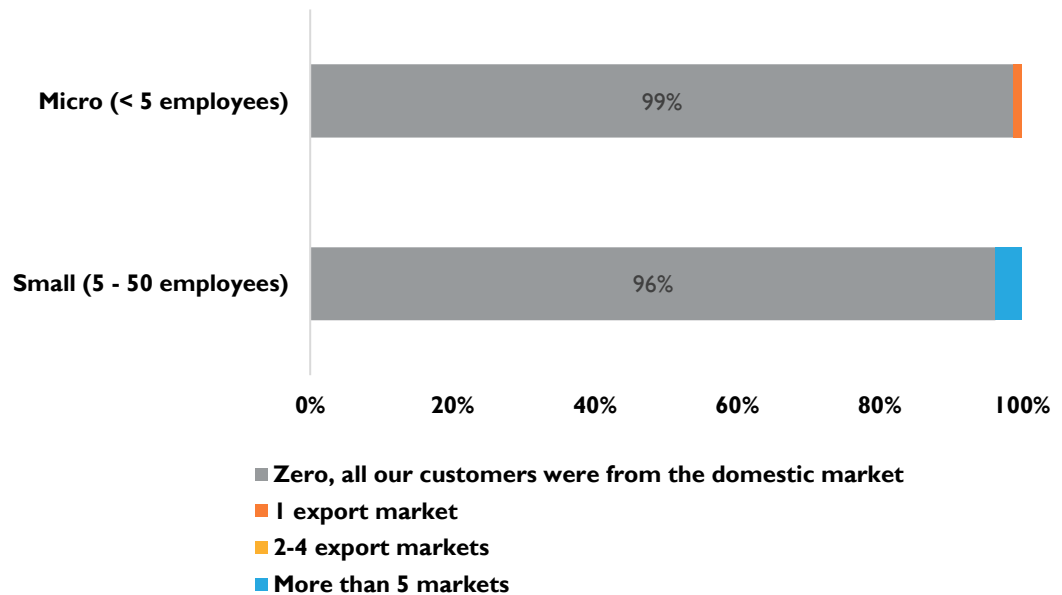


Figure 4 – Participating firms’ experience with exporting (number of markets exported to)





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II. Reported Impacts

In looking at the pre-training and post-training surveys, an overwhelming majority of participants reported increased levels of confidence (figure 5).

Among firms with 5 or less employees:

- 89% improved considerably around the topic of expanding business internationally.
- 89% improved considerably their knowledge of packaging and logistic standards.
- 82% improved considerably around the topic of business e-commerce strategy.

Among firms that have between 5-50 employees:

- 88% improved considerably around the topic of expanding business internationally.
- 90% improved considerably in their knowledge of packaging and logistic standards.
- 88% improved considerably around the topic of business e-commerce strategy.

Over 80% of all participants reported moderate to high increased levels of confidence across all three topic areas (figure 6).

Figure 5 – Participating firms’ improvement in confidence





Figure 6 – Participating firms’ post-course level of confidence



Special-Edition Hybrid Training

The program was amended with a Special Edition to include hybrid training sessions to expand the program’s reach. Selected community partners were invited to develop one-day training sessions for participants. A total of **117 participants** attended the in-person sessions, 91 of whom successfully completed the E-commerce: Ready-Set-Go mentoring component.

A total of **43** participants completed pre- and post- training surveys for the hybrid training sessions:

- Participating micro-enterprises reported increased levels of confidence in business strategy, knowledge of packaging and logistic standards, and expanding business internationally.
- An overwhelming majority of participating micro- and small enterprises reported improvement in their knowledge across several ecommerce topic areas (Figure 7).

Of the **49** participants who completed the pre- and post- mentoring surveys (Figure 8):

- 49% reported increased levels of confidence to participate in crossborder e-commerce.
- 43% reported increased perceived levels of support to launch internationally.
- 39% reported increased readiness to expand internationally within the next 6 months.





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Figure 7 – (Special Edition) Reported improvement in ecommerce topic areas

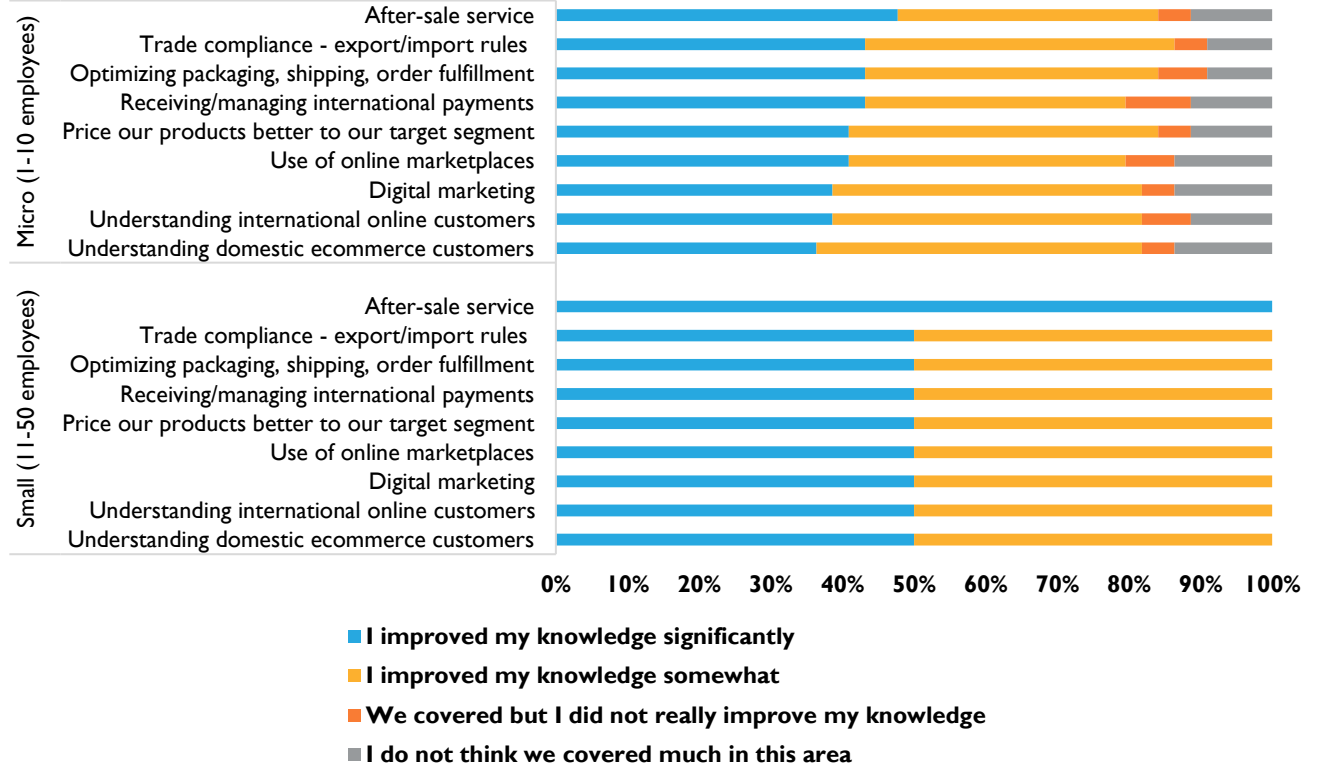
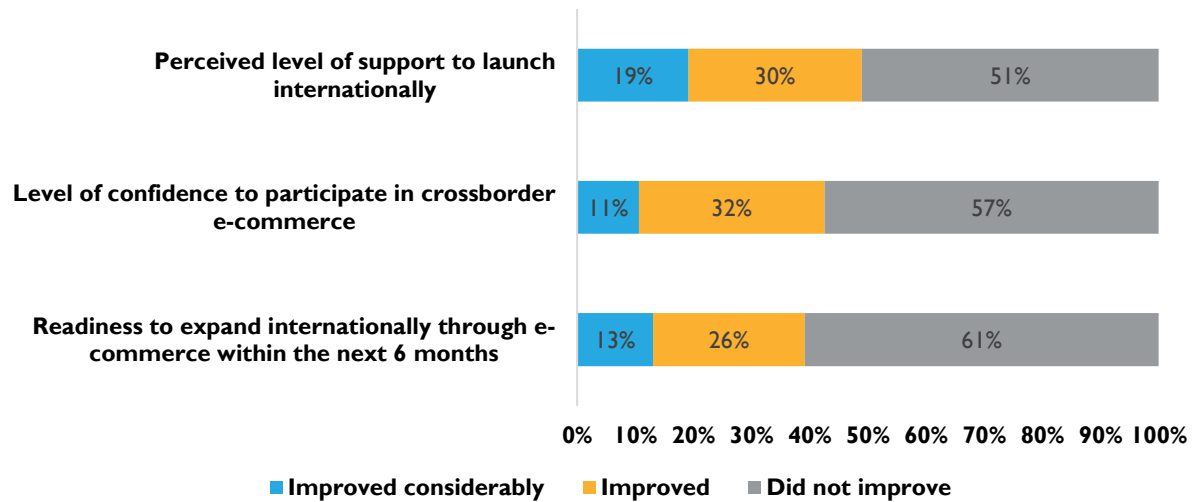


Figure 8 – (Mentoring Component) Reported improvement in readiness to engage in e-commerce





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III. Lessons-Learned

What worked well:

- Familiarity built trust and continuity, leading to higher engagement.
- Participant were intrinsically motivated and excited about the program.

Challenges in implementation:

- Limited availability and interest of seasoned entrepreneurs.
- Misalignment between program focus and needs of seasoned entrepreneurs.
- Preference for in-person training sessions which can pose logistical constraints.

Recommendations to overcome challenges:

- Future programs should highlight unique benefits and value propositions.
- Promote and foster strong relationships between participants and trainers.
- Clearly communicate program components and skills/knowledge participants can gain.
- When possible, offer more a mix of in-person, virtual, and interactive training sessions.
- Establish clear pathways for participants who have completed initial training to further their development.

This summary was prepared by Jem Marasigan, Nextrade Group.

About Alliance partner DHL

As a resource partner of USAID's Alliance for eTrade Development II (eTrade Alliance), DHL has actively contributed its expertise and training to cultivate greater e-commerce activity in emerging economies. DHL has a longstanding presence in Malaysia, providing commercial logistics and shipping services to MSMEs. This partnership aims to take advantage of the complementarity of the Asia Foundation and DHL initiatives by incorporating DHL Modules into the Accelerate My Business program and exploring opportunities to help MSMEs succeed in online marketplaces more broadly.

