



C&A Foundation



Fabric of Change

INNOVATING FOR A SUSTAINABLE APPAREL INDUSTRY

April 2018

CHANGING SYSTEMS FOR APPAREL HOMEWORKERS

A case study on Altitud's work in Mexico

Altitud, is a microfinance institution, founded by Gabriel Rivera Rio Zambrano in 2011 to make micro-credit available to women setting up home-based businesses for the production of apparel. Gabriel is an Ashoka Fellow participating in Fabric of Change, an initiative by Ashoka and C&A Foundation supporting a network of social entrepreneurs around the globe to bring more socially and environmentally sustainable practices to the apparel sector.

ALTITUD AT A GLANCE

- ▶ **Key goal:** generate development opportunities for micro-enterprises through affordable credit with a specific focus on apparel homeworkers in Mexico
- ▶ Founded in 2011 by Gabriel Rivera Rio Zambrano
- ▶ **Model:**
 - ▶ Credit is destined to the acquisition of production capital (no cash given)
 - ▶ Provides professional training to clients
 - ▶ Enables commercial links with factories
 - ▶ Raises awareness among industry actors
- ▶ Operates in the State of Nuevo Leon, Mexico
- ▶ **Impact:**
 - ▶ More than 764,000 USD disbursed in loans to date and over 735 micro-entrepreneurs supported
 - ▶ 85% of Altitud's clients are women
 - ▶ 76% of Altitud's clients work in the apparel sector



Altitud's mission is to generate development opportunities for micro-enterprises, such as those in the apparel sector, through accessible and innovative financial services with a social commitment to promote family success and well-being for Mexicans.

Altitud's main impacts are through direct service provision, with plans to scale operations in the next years. It has a clear systems change approach, although impact in the maquila industry still needs to be strengthened. Achieving framework change demands addressing structural issues regarding gender inequality which are currently not considered by Altitud's approach.

HOW ALTITUD HAS AN IMPACT ON VARIOUS LEVELS

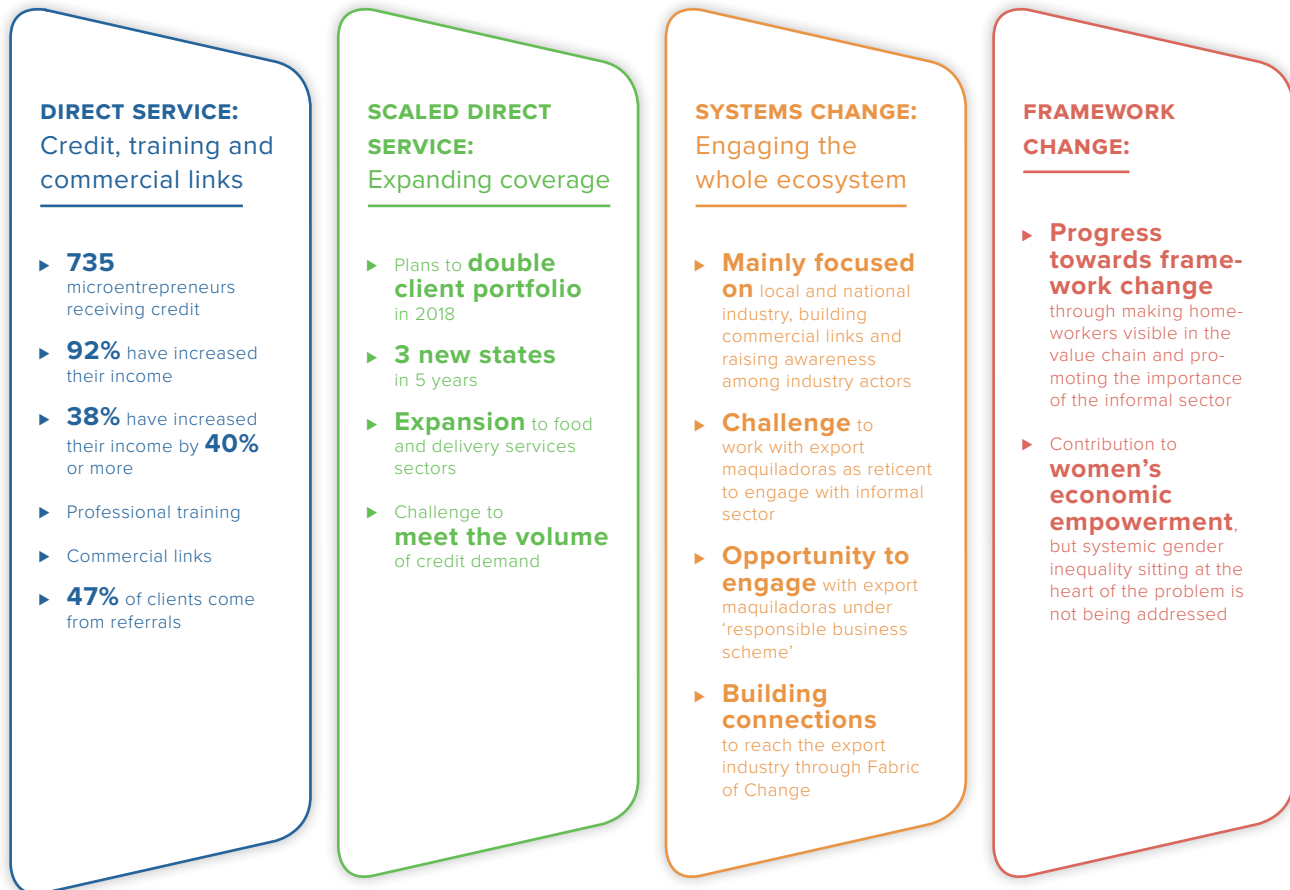


Figure 1: Altitud's different levels of impact ▲

Altitud changes systems for apparel homeworkers by taking an integral approach with four main strategies:

- ▶ Providing credit for the purchasing of equipment. Altitud works with suppliers so clients receive the equipment directly. No cash is handed out to clients.
- ▶ Training in production techniques is provided free of charge to clients.
- ▶ Enabling commercial links with factories so that they place their orders with its clients.
- ▶ Working to raise awareness among future designers on the realities affecting workers in the apparel sector, with a view to improving the industry's practices over time.

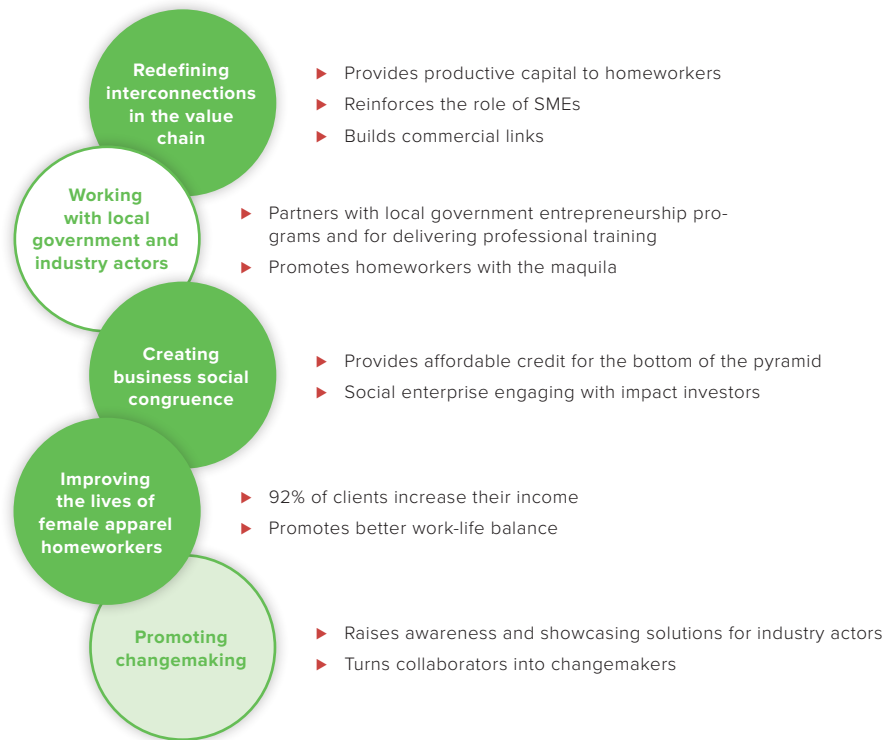


HOW ALTITUD CHANGES SYSTEMS

Figure 2: Altitud's systems change approach

Legend: Strength of systems change approach

- High
- Medium
- Low



FABRIC OF CHANGE AT A GLANCE

- ▶ **Key goal:** support social innovators to turn the apparel industry into a force for good.
- ▶ **A 3-year initiative** led by Ashoka in collaboration with C&A Foundation
- ▶ **A vibrant network** of 29 inspiring social entrepreneurs positively impacting:
 - ▶ Over 420,000 apparel sector workers, artisans and other citizens directly and another 5.4 million individuals indirectly
 - ▶ 1,800 businesses and organizations
- ▶ Beyond the core network, 400 innovative projects from around the world were mobilised through an online Changemakers Challenge
- ▶ The initiative has dispersed over 500,000 Euros in direct support to social entrepreneurs' work and has hosted several gatherings around influential apparel sector events around the world.

Fabric of Change