



**From  
Outreach  
to Impact**





Wiah from the Jonggol district, Indonesia, is making banana chips for her business.



## Table of contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Methodology	4
3. Demographics	5
4. Wellbeing and future outlook	6
5. Change in income	7
6. Change in savings	9
7. Business development	10
8. Housing and basic facilities	11
9. Health and education	12
10. Most significant changes	13
11. Actioning the data	14
12. Our approach, challenges and outlook	14
13. Appendix	15

### Client Self-Perception Survey 2022: From Outreach to Impact

This document was produced by Oikocredit, Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society U.A. (Oikocredit International) with the greatest of care and to the best of its knowledge and belief at the time of writing (December 2022). Oikocredit International provides no guarantee with regard to its content and completeness and does not accept any liability for losses which might arise from using this information.

Authors: **Ging Ledesma,**  
**Fiorella Perroni Méndez,**  
**Kawien Ziedses des Plantes,**  
**John Callaghan,**  
**Ruben León**

Photos: **Opmeer Reports,**  
**FSP staff,**  
**Dinamostudio,**  
**Oikocredit staff**

Design: **Torsten van Geest @ Bureau Paraaf**

Copyright © 2023 **Oikocredit International**

## Executive summary: key findings and recommendations

In 2022, Oikocredit worked with 19 partner organisations to find out what changes their clients have experienced over the past 12 months. The resulting survey data in this report reflects changes as perceived by respondents and is therefore considered subjective. However, it is extremely relevant in providing a systematic and efficient way of listening to the voices of clients.

The social data collected through the responses of 16,471 end-clients in Latin America & the Caribbean, Africa and Asia points to several key findings and recommendations. A multi-disciplinary team, led by the Oikocredit Strategy & Sustainable Impact unit, compiled the surveys in cooperation with teams at the participating financial service providers (FSPs).

### Key findings

1. The majority of respondents (89%) said that Oikocredit's FSP partners had a positive influence on their wellbeing over the last 12 months.
2. The study revealed the importance of savings in meeting basic needs. Moreover, an increase in savings was linked to an increase in the ability to cope with health needs and emergencies.
3. Overall, extreme weather affected the income of 46% of respondents. This percentage was even higher among 8 out of the 19 FSPs in the survey.

### Recommendations

1. Investigate which client groups are most affected by extreme weather events and explore solutions.
2. Continue to promote savings because only 64% of respondents said they have savings.
3. Since improvements to internet access were positively correlated to increased income, explore opportunities for digitalising products and services.
4. Business owners who expanded their business with a new product or service were more likely to increase income. Explore further which factors contributed to their business expansion.



## 1. Introduction

The Client Self-Perception Survey pushes the frontiers of monitoring the impact of financial service providers (FSPs) on their clients. Keeping these end-clients at the centre of our work is critical to creating social impact. We must respond to their perception of change in their lives, their emerging needs and their challenges.

Oikocredit launched the survey in 2021 because many organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America serving lower-income people have a mission to improve their clients' lives. Yet, many organisations lack the capacity to structurally monitor and measure what is happening in the lives of their clients. End-clients, in turn, are limited in the way they can effectively express their needs. This makes it difficult for organisations to (1) make evidence-based decisions on how to improve their products and services to meet the needs of their clients, and (2) to report on social impact changes over time. Following a first successful year with five partner organisations,

Oikocredit expanded the programme and partnered with 19 financial service providers (FSPs) in 2022. The aim is to continue building capacity and providing digital surveying and data analysis support on client outcomes in the years ahead. The 2022 aggregate report combines the survey data from the 19 partners and presents the most actionable insights discovered by listening to the end-clients. Gender, extreme weather and digital access are topics that featured prominently.

After describing the methodology and the demographics of clients included in the survey, this report addresses the most significant insights relating to income, savings, business development, access to basic facilities and the ability to cover health and medical needs. The report contains examples of how partners have actioned the data, and finally an appendix with additional details about the survey data.





## 2. Methodology

Oikocredit deliberately selected FSPs that have a clear social mission and that want to systematically track social changes at their client level. Once a year, clients are surveyed through a short digital questionnaire about the perceived changes in their lives over the past 12 months. The Client Self-Perception Survey is completed through a variety of channels to best accommodate a diversity of clients and to ensure an inclusive collection method.

The survey questionnaire is adapted to the specific FSP and clients while maintaining standard questions. Sample size is aimed to reflect a high confidence level of 90 to 95% with at least 700 respondents per FSP where possible. It is important to note that the samples are not necessarily representative of the FSP and, in aggregate, are not representative of the inclusive finance sector or a geographic region. Surveying inherently carries bias, we therefore always recommend cross referencing results with available internal data.

The survey focuses on the self-perception of clients and provides valuable insights through collaborative efforts. The survey data indirectly reflects how effective the work of Oikocredit and our project partners has been in generating positive changes as perceived by clients and is therefore subjective.

In 2022, we conducted the survey in seven languages with 19 FSPs in 12 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America & the Caribbean.

In 2022, 16,471 clients participated in the survey. (2021: 5 FSPs and 2,546 clients participated).

Graphs throughout this report reference an 'n-number'. The 'n-number' (n=) clarifies the total sample size of respondents for each visualisation.

### COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

When selecting future partners for the self-perception survey, it is recommended to select partners that are less familiar with using digital channels to reach their clients. By participating in the self-perception survey, these FSPs can experience how to use digital channels to their advantage over a longer period of time.



### 3. Demographics

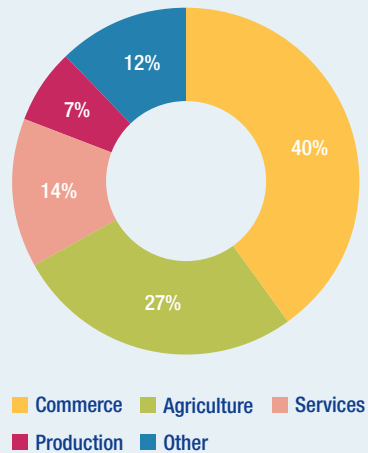
In 2022, 19 Oikocredit partners participated in the Client Self-Perception Survey on change:

- Eight partners in Latin America & the Caribbean
- Five partners in Asia
- Six partners in Africa

Of 16,471 total respondents, 74% were women. This high percentage is a result of the strategy of several of the 19 participating FSPs to focus on women. Among 15,618 who gave information on their age, most respondents (57%) were aged between 31 and 50, although their ages ranged from 18 to 81. Commerce (the sale of goods for profit, e.g. shop owner, clothes seller) was the most common business sector among respondents who identified their business sector, accounting for 6,441 (40%) of 16,200 respondents. Agriculture (activities engaged in growing crops and raising animals) was the second most common activity.

Respondents by business sector

(n=16,200)



#### COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

Clients were asked to indicate which loan products they had received since they became clients of their FSP. Some FSPs offer loan products dedicated to clients in a particular business sector. Whenever there has been a low uptake of a relevant product, it is advised to review the product design and the channels used to deliver that product.





## 4. Wellbeing and future outlook

Of all respondents, 89.9% said that Oikocredit's partner FSP had had a positive impact on their wellbeing over the past 12 months.

When asked about their outlook for the future, 40% of respondents replied that in the past 12 months they had become more worried about the future, compared with 34% who said they had become less worried. Further analysis showed:

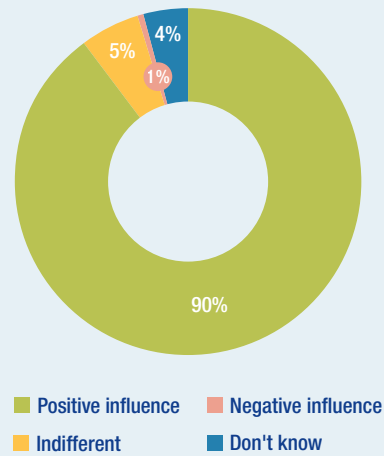
- Clients supported by the FSP for five years or longer were more likely to be less worried about the future, compared to clients who are shorter-term members of the FSP.
- Older clients were more likely to be less worried about the future than younger clients.
- Women were more likely to be less worried about the future than men.

### COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

While the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic has passed, end-clients may still feel its lingering effects. The resulting economic crisis is known to have particularly affected low-income communities. Volatility in savings, income and no livelihood security makes these communities vulnerable to any type of crisis. Currently, the focus of global attention is on inflation, food security and climate change. All of these are evident in the responses collected to varying degrees. The high number of respondents who state they are more worried about the future is a clear signal that stress and anxiety are present and should be addressed. Health interventions and support can improve economic outcomes. Similarly, economic interventions can benefit people's health.

### Influence of FSP on wellbeing over the past 12 months

(n=16,326)







## 5. Change in income

### Most respondents perceived an improvement in their income over the last 12 months.

Out of 16,111 respondents who provided information about their perception of change in their income, 63% reported an improvement in income, 22% indicated their income remained the same and 15% of respondents said they perceived a decrease in income in the last 12 months. The two most common client explanations for income improvement were increasing sales from their existing products or services and an increase in salary from an existing job.

### Income increase was positive for clients belonging to all business sectors.

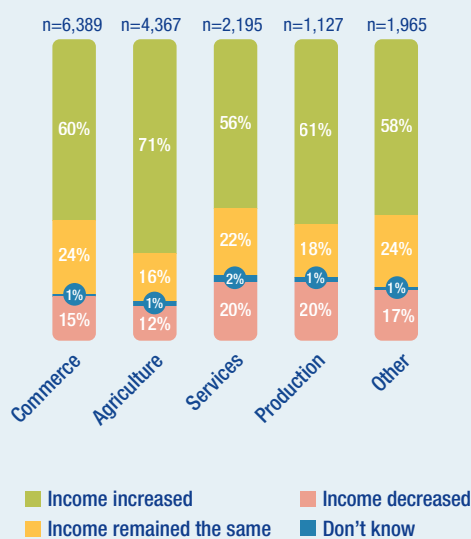
Across all business sectors, most respondents reported a perception of improvement in their income over the past 12 months.

Of those 16,043 respondents who answered both questions on perception of change in income and their business sector, the division per sector was: 40% commerce, 27% agriculture, 14% services, 7% production and 12% other.

- The highest percentage of respondents indicating their income had increased were active in agriculture (71%). For respondents from other business sectors, the perception in increased income was comparably lower.
- Even though the majority of clients working in the production and service sector perceived an increase in income, notably, 20% of respondents from each of these sectors said their income decreased over 12 months.

### Change in income by business sector

(n=16,043)



### Investment in internet access related to income growth.

Analysis showed that respondents who invested to improve their internet access in the last 12 months were more likely to respond that their income had increased compared to clients who did not invest to improve their internet access.

A total of 15,795 respondents provided information on income change and whether they have invested in internet access. Among this group, 51% said they have invested in improving their internet access in the last 12 months.



- Among the 8,118 respondents who invested in internet access, 89% of respondents perceived an increase in their income in the last 12 months.
- Among the 7,677 respondents who said that they did not invest in internet access, 78% of respondents perceived an increase in their income in the last 12 months.

### Income increase and savings increase are linked.

In total, 10,481 respondents provided information on perceived change to both their income and savings. Data analysis reinforces the notion that an increase in income could more likely lead to an increase in savings.

- Among the 9,091 respondents who said their income increased or remained the same, 92% also said their savings increased or remained the same.
- By contrast, among the 1,266 respondents who said their income decreased, 47% said their savings increased or stayed the same.

### A substantial proportion of clients had their income disrupted by an extreme weather event.

In total, 16,246 respondents provided information on the impact of extreme weather on their income over 12 months. Of these respondents, 46% said their income had been disrupted by an extreme weather event in the last 12 months.

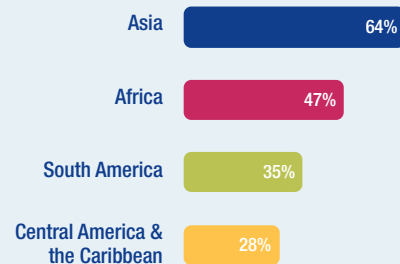
- In Asia, 64% of respondents perceived a disruption of extreme weather on income. This result was heavily influenced by a large number of respondents from one organisation in the Philippines.
- In Africa, 47% of clients said their income was disrupted by extreme weather.
- In South America, 35% of respondents reported that their income was disrupted by extreme weather.
- By contrast, participants in Central America and the Caribbean show the lowest percentage of respondents (28%) saying their income was disrupted by an extreme weather event.

Analysis revealed that respondents whose income was affected by extreme weather were more likely to say that their savings had decreased, compared to the respondents who said they were not affected.

Note that results are not necessarily representative for the regions. Results also showed differences even across the different branches of each participating organisation.

### Extreme weather affected income

(n= 16,246)





## 6. Change in savings

### Many respondents perceived an improvement in their savings over the last 12 months.

There were 10,707 respondents (64% of the total) who said they have savings. From these respondents, 10,504 provided information on their perception of change to their savings in the last 12 months. 66% said their savings improved, 20% said their savings stayed the same, 11% perceived a decrease to their savings and 3% did not know how their savings were affected.

### Agriculture was the activity sector that increased savings the most.

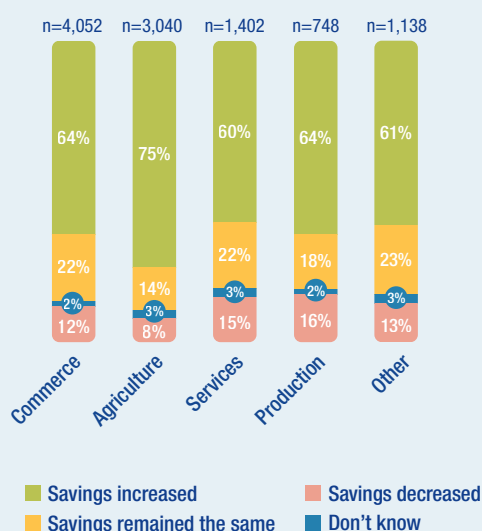
In line with the perception of income change, the majority of respondents from all business sectors reported a perception of improvement in their savings over the past 12 months.

Among all the respondents, 10,380 responded to both questions on perception of change to savings and their business sector.

- The highest percentage of respondents indicating their savings had increased were active in agriculture (75%). For respondents from other business sectors, a lower proportion perceived an increase in their savings.
- Even though the majority of respondents working in the production and service sectors perceived an increase in savings, notably, 16% and 15% of respondents from these sectors said their savings decreased over 12 months.

### Change in savings by business sector

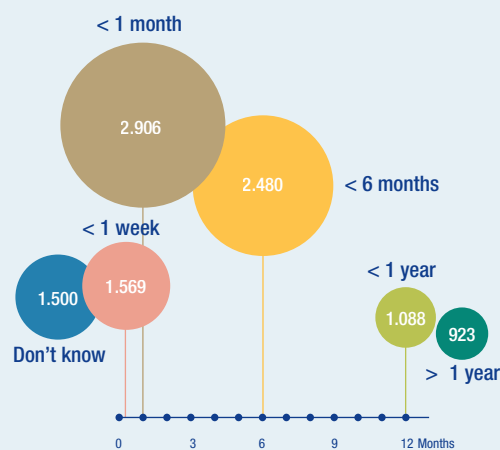
(n=10,380)



Respondents with savings gave information on how long they could support themselves using only their current savings. Of these respondents, 43% said they could support themselves for one month or less. This reveals an opportunity for many respondents to strengthen their current savings. Stronger savings would provide a safety net for respondents in the event of a financial shock.

### Time respondents can support themselves using their current savings

(n=10,466)



From respondents who answered the question about if they have withdrawn savings or not in the last 12 months, 6,463 (62%) responded 'Yes'. The two main reasons respondents withdrew savings were to buy food for their household (21%) and to cover health expenses (17%).

- For African respondents, the main reasons for withdrawing savings were to invest in their business (22%), to pay for education (18%) and to buy food for their household (17%).
- For respondents in Asia, the main reasons respondents withdrew savings were to buy food for their household (24%), to pay for health expenses (18%) and to pay for education (13%).
- Respondents in Central America and the Caribbean said that investing in their business (32%), paying for health expenses (15%) and buying food for their household (15%) were the main reasons for withdrawing savings.
- Respondents in South America reported that health expenses (21%), investing in their business (20%) and buying food for their household (13%) were the main reasons for withdrawing savings.

Analysis showed that respondents who received a higher level of education were not more likely to increase their savings or keep them the same compared to respondents who were less educated.



## 7. Business development

### The majority of respondents with a business expanded.

Of the 16,300 respondents who answered the question on whether they had a business, the majority of 11,583 respondents (71%) said they have a business. Of these, the majority said they expanded their business over the past 12 months:

- 69% expanded their business by offering a new product or service.
- 52% purchased new equipment or machinery for their business.
- 33% employed someone new in their business.

Note that the same respondent may have expanded their business in different ways.

### Expansion of business with a new product or service was related to increased income.

Analysis showed that business owners who expanded their business with a new product or service were more likely to increase their income compared to those who did not expand with a new product or service.

A total of 11,406 respondents answered both the question on whether they expanded their business by adding a new product or service and the question on change to their income.

- Among 7,840 respondents who expanded their business with a new product or service, 92% said their income increased over 12 months.
- Among 3,566 business owners who did not expand their business, 65% said their income increased over 12 months.

### Expansion of business by employing new people was related to increased income.

Analysis showed that business owners who employed someone new in their business were more likely to increase their income compared to those who did not employ someone new over 12 months.

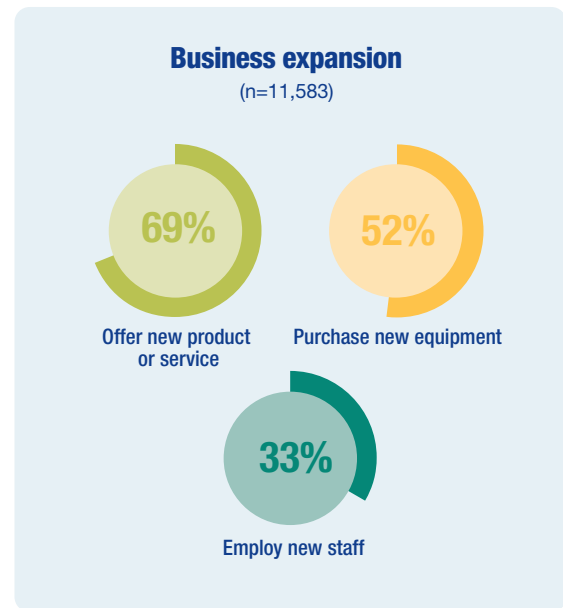
A total of 11,346 respondents answered both the question on whether they employed someone new in their business and the question on change to their income.

- While a minority of 3,712 business owners did employ someone new in their business, 93% said their income increased over 12 months.
- 7,634 business owners did not employ someone new in their business. Among these respondents, 79% said their income increased over 12 months.

### Level of education was related to business expansion.

Analysis showed that respondents who received a higher level of education were more likely to expand their business by adding a new product or service.

A total of 11,411 respondents answered both the question on whether they expanded their business by adding a new product or service and the question on their



level of education. Respondents were grouped as having higher education (secondary or university level) or as receiving non-formal or primary education.

- Among 4,731 respondents who received non-formal or primary education, 65% said they expanded their business by adding a new product or service over 12 months.
- Among 6,323 respondents in the group of higher level education, 71% said they expanded their business by adding a new product or service over 12 months.
- A small number of 357 respondents indicated they received 'other' education, and 73% of this group expanded their business with a new product or service over 12 months.

### Older adults were less likely to expand their business with a new product or service.

Analysis revealed a relationship between business expansion by adding a new product or service and the respondent's age. Nonetheless, there was little difference in the business expansion decisions made by younger adults (aged 18-30) and adults (aged 31- 50). Older adults (aged over 50) were less likely to expand their business with a new product or service over 12 months.





## 8. Housing and basic facilities

From 16,179 respondents who answered the question on whether their house has been repaired or improved in the last 12 months, 8,091 (50%) answered 'Yes' and 8,088 (50%) answered 'No'.

For the 8,091 respondents who improved their house, the proportion that said their access to basic facilities improved was significantly higher (67%) compared to the 8,088 respondents who did not repair their house (36%).

Out of the 16,214 people who answered the question on changes in their access to basic facilities, only 818 (5%) perceived their access to basic facilities to be diminished.

### Internet and devices

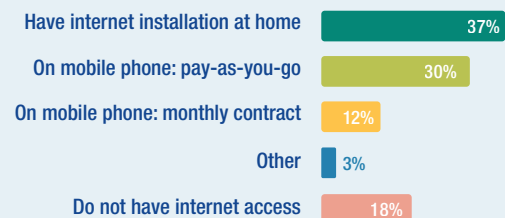
Among 15,976 respondents who answered the question on smartphone ownership, 81% said they own a smartphone.

- In South America, 89% of respondents said they own a smartphone.
- In Central America & the Caribbean, 88% of respondents said they own a smartphone.
- In Asia, 82% of respondents said they own a smartphone.
- In Africa, 59% of respondents said they own a smartphone.

From 15,868 respondents to the question on internet improvement, 50% said they improved their internet over 12 months.

### Access to the internet

(n=15,515)



Information was received from 15,515 respondents about their main way of accessing the internet.

- 42% access the internet through their mobile phone (using pay-as-you go or a monthly contract).
- 37% access internet mainly through a home installation.
- 3% access the internet in 'Other' ways.
- 18% said they have no internet access.

Note that results are not necessarily representative for the regions. Results also showed differences even across the different branches of each participating organisation.





## 9. Health and education

### Ability to cope with health needs and emergencies improved.

A total of 16,019 respondents gave information on changes to their household's ability to cope with health needs and emergencies over 12 months. Positively, the majority of respondents said their household improved these abilities over 12 months.

- 58% said their household's ability to cope with health needs and emergencies improved.
- 34% said their household's ability to cope with health needs and emergencies stayed the same.
- 6% said their household's ability to cope with health needs and emergencies decreased.
- 2% answered 'don't know'.

### Increased savings relates to increased ability to cope with health needs/emergencies.

Data analysis supports the notion that savings provide low-income people with a vital safety net in the event of emergency.

Among the total respondents, 10,249 answered both questions on change to their savings and change to their household's ability to cope with health needs and emergencies over 12 months.

- Among 8,775 respondents who increased or kept their savings the same over 12 months, 96% perceived an improvement in their ability to cope with health needs/emergencies.
- Among 1,180 respondents who decreased their savings over 12 months, 74% perceived an increase in their ability to cope with health needs/emergencies.

### Children were attending school regularly.

Among 15,980 respondents to the question about children, 61% said they take care of children aged 15 or below.

Of the relevant respondents, 9,564 answered the question on whether their children were attending school regularly. From this group, 12% said 'No'.

Among respondents whose children were not attending school regularly, 981 gave information on the most important reason why their children missed school over 12 months.

- 50% said that missed school was due to effects from Covid-19.
- 7% said their children missed school due to a lack of money to cover school costs.
- 37% said that missed school was due to 'other' reasons (beyond a lack of available transport, beyond the need for the child to do household chores, and beyond the previously mentioned reasons).

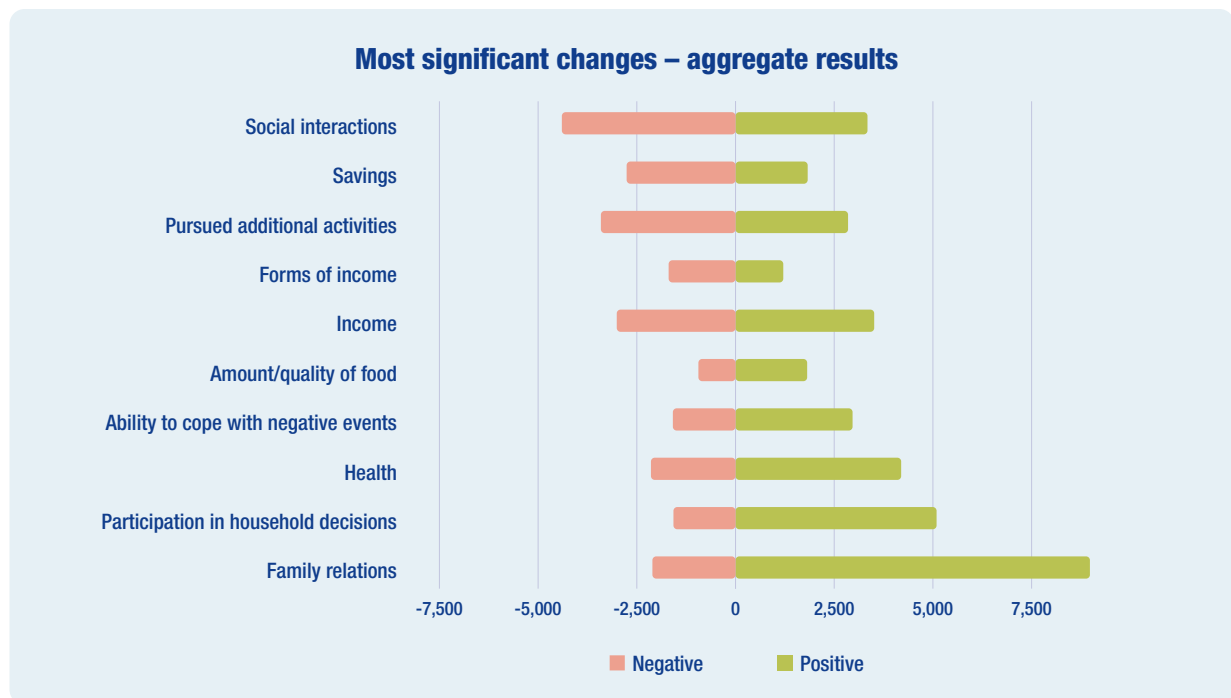


## 10. Most significant changes

Respondents were asked to indicate what they perceived to be the 'most significant positive' and 'most significant negative' changes in their lives over 12 months. 16,304 respondents specified at least one significant positive or negative change in their lives over 12 months.

Overall, the most positive changes that respondents perceived were 'more harmonious relationships in the household', 'increased participation in household decisions' and 'better health'.

By contrast, the most negative changes perceived by respondents were 'fewer social interactions', 'decreased savings', 'fewer activities pursued' and 'fewer forms of income'. More respondents perceived negative changes to these indicators than positive changes.



## 11. Actioning the data

Oikocredit's FSP partners in the Client Self-Perception Survey have taken action based on the data they have collected from their client's responses. While partners have taken unique actions that fit with their mission, infrastructure and capabilities, some common themes can be recognised.

Most significantly, partners have taken first steps towards embedding the survey data into their long-term operations. These organisations have defined particular results from the survey as social indicators of their organisational mission. In some cases, partners have already begun to implement strategies focused on improving these social indicators.

On a more immediate basis, survey results have prompted partners to revisit the products they offer to their clients, helping partners to align those products more closely with the needs their clients have voiced through the survey. For instance, partners in Brazil, India and Nigeria have launched new loan products dedicated to meeting health, business expansion and education needs respectively. Moreover, partners have used the survey results to adjust the design of existing products, ensuring these products benefit and resonate with their target clients.

Survey results have also provided a platform for partners to expand their offering of non-financial services to clients. In December 2022, partners in the Philippines and Kenya implemented new training programmes dedicated to business management, covering key themes such as financial literacy training, budgeting, debt management and product marketing.

Notably, the survey has increased the flow of client feedback across different levels of the FSP partner organisations for operational and decision-making purposes. For instance, some partners have worked with their communications departments to make their communication with clients more efficient. Some partners have engaged their marketing departments to conduct additional research based on survey results, while other partners have communicated results to their IT departments to explore further opportunities for digitalisation.

## 12. Our approach, challenges and outlook

The Client Self-Perception Survey is a follow-up to Oikocredit's Client Outcomes Programme and respective lessons learned. We learned that organisations often have client data but find it challenging to systematically analyse and action the data. We have incorporated solutions to these challenges into the current survey: digitalisation facilitates ease of collection, monitoring and analysis; establishing a survey and baseline standard ensures comparison year-on-year; and actioning data happens when the data is relevant and stakeholders can simultaneously access the same data dashboards.

Equally important is the close collaboration between Oikocredit and the FSPs. By working as a team to collect and analyse survey data, the next step to actioning the data is achieved. The goal is to discover how clients have perceived the changes that have taken place in their lives over the past 12 months and, by doing so, to identify opportunities, risks and impact. The aim is for partners to integrate their clients' responses into reports for management decision-making. To facilitate this, partners receive direct access to their clients' responses via an interactive PowerBI dashboard and through individual reports provided by Oikocredit. Other strength drivers of the programme are data analysis workshops, peer exchanges and the aggregate data report.

The survey employs interactive and user-friendly software so that partners can efficiently collect, visualise and enhance data to better understand clients' needs and tailor products and services accordingly. After careful review of a number of survey software applications, ODK ([getodk.org](https://getodk.org)) came up as the preferred provider. By standardising the survey questionnaire while allowing for tailoring to specific FSPs products, locations and language requirements, we created data which the FSPs could use for action planning. This fulfils a key objective of the programme which is to support partners in evidence-based decision making for positive social impact.



## 13. Appendix

This appendix provides additional detail on the survey data used as the basis of this report. In Table 1, numbers of respondents are fewer than the overall survey totals. This is because not all respondents answered every question, and the data below excludes respondents who did not provide an answer to the question concerned.

**Table 1. Business sector by FSPs per region**

Region	Total respondents	Commerce		Agriculture		Services		Production		Other	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Africa	2771	1216	44%	526	19%	549	20%	187	7%	293	11%
Asia	5589	1578	28%	2530	45%	636	11%	384	7%	461	8%
Central America & the Caribbean	3630	2144	59%	508	14%	458	13%	177	5%	343	9%
South America	4210	1503	36%	836	20%	566	13%	386	9%	919	22%

**Table 2. Number of partners by country and region**

Region	Country	Number of partners
Africa	Kenya	4
	Nigeria	1
	Uganda	1
Asia	Cambodia	2
	India	2
	Philippines	1
Central America & the Caribbean	Guatemala	1
	Honduras	2
South America	Bolivia	1
	Brazil	2
	Ecuador	1
	Peru	1

**Table 3. Business sectors – definitions**

<b>Commerce</b>	The purchase and sale of goods with profit motive, usually for resale.
<b>Services</b>	Involves the provision of services to other businesses and the general population. Occupations associated with the services sector include working as a sales assistant in a shop or as a waiter in a cafe or restaurant; taxi or truck driver; hairdresser; tailor; and tourist guide. Service activities may sometimes overlap with commerce activities.
<b>Agriculture</b>	Involves activities engaged in growing crops, raising animals, and harvesting fish and other animals on a farm or ranch or from their natural habitat.
<b>Production</b>	Involves the aggregating, packing, purifying or processing of raw materials into new commodities or goods with value added. The final products can serve either as finished goods for sale to final customers or as intermediate goods used in the production process of other goods.



## Oikocredit's mission

Oikocredit challenges all to invest responsibly. It provides financial services and supports organisations to improve the quality of life of low-income people or communities in a sustainable way.

## Oikocredit International

 +31 33 422 40 40  
 [info@oikocredit.org](mailto:info@oikocredit.org)  
 [www.oikocredit.coop](http://www.oikocredit.coop)

**Visiting address**  
Berkenweg 7  
3818 LA Amersfoort  
The Netherlands

**Postal address**  
PO Box 2136  
3800 CC Amersfoort  
The Netherlands