



The Challenge

Small and medium enterprises are the biggest contributor to **employment** across countries, providing over 66% of jobs on average. SMEs are also thought to drive **innovation**, **social mobility**, and **productivity**. However, businesses in developing countries grow less than firms in developed countries due to constraints such as limited access to finance, low levels of human capital, and inefficient markets. Because these constraints hinder the SME sector's contribution to job creation and economic growth, governments and other organizations in developing countries spend billions of dollars each year on programs that aim to address the barriers to growth for SMEs. Unfortunately, **little evidence exists on how to effectively address these constraints to unlock SME growth**.

Our Work



Build the body of evidence

The SME Program brings together **leading researchers** and **innovative organizations** to test new ideas and evaluate existing SME development approaches. Relying on its **research management expertise**, these partnerships lead to high-quality, cutting-edge research that informs SME policy design. The Program also directly supports new research projects through its Competitive Research Fund on Entrepreneurship and SME Growth.



Promote evidence-based decision-making

Producing evidence is not enough to achieve policy impact; results must reach those with the power to enact change. The SME Program works closely with its partner organizations to ensure that **research findings inform programmatic and operational decisions**. The Program also shares evidence with multilateral organizations, non-profits, governments, donors, and the private sector through various media outlets, policy documents, and international events.



Small and Medium Enterprises Brief

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Lea este resumen es español [aquí](#).

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