

Impact Report 2025

ERSTE  | Social Banking
Group

Supported by
ERSTE



8000 million euros
in funding to support those
often overlooked



Here's how we've made
a difference in 2025

Our commitment to enabling and securing prosperity for the people of our region remains the cornerstone of our purpose.

For more than two centuries, one idea has defined who we are: prosperity should not be a privilege, but a possibility for everyone. From our very beginning, Erste Group was founded on the conviction that progress gains strength when it is shared. That conviction still guides us today. Our commitment to enabling and securing prosperity for the people of our region remains the cornerstone of our purpose.

Through Social Banking, this purpose becomes tangible. Since 2016, we have worked to expand access to finance, strengthen financial health, and help individuals, communities and organisations build resilient futures across Austria and Central and Eastern Europe. Our impact is measurable: more than € 800 million in financing has supported over 60.000 clients, helping to create or preserve more than 110.000 jobs.

Our regular impact surveys remind us that banking is not only about balance sheets; it is about people – their lives, their hopes, and their capacity to create change. In 2025, 82 % of clients in financial difficulty reported feeling less worried about their financial situation, and 75 % of starting and micro entrepreneurs improved their overall economic situation. These are not just statistics – they are stories of renewed confidence and restored dignity.

Behind these achievements stand our teams, our partners, and the communities we serve. Their dedication and belief make progress possible. Each success proves that when we combine expertise with empathy, finance becomes a force for good.

As we look ahead, our mission remains unchanged: to open paths to prosperity and to ensure that everyone has the confidence and the means to walk them. Together, we can build a future in which growth is sustainable, opportunity is shared, and prosperity truly knows no bounds.



Peter Bosek
CEO, Erste Group

Creating real impact takes more than a great idea, enthusiasm, or funding. It requires capabilities, partnerships, and an environment that fosters innovation.

What does impact mean? There are countless definitions, but at its core, impact is about making lives better. That is what drives us at ERSTE Foundation, with deep commitment and perseverance.

Creating real impact takes more than a great idea, enthusiasm, or funding. It requires capabilities, partnerships, and an environment that fosters innovation. This is why we work in close collaboration with Erste Group and a dynamic international community of non-profit organisations, institutions, capacity builders, and social entrepreneurs. Together, we form a broad ecosystem, united by shared values and common goals.

For an ecosystem to work, it is key to build long-term and robust relationships. Respect and trust are central elements for them to prosper. The ability to adapt and change is what makes progress possible, and the ability to listen is what makes financial services meet the needs of social businesses and organisations. As ERSTE Foundation, we are committed to co-creating this ecosystem.

The year 2025 demonstrated the power of combining a deep understanding of societal needs, social innovation, and tailored financial solutions. Successful examples inspire others to follow, and together we share our experiences and learn from each other.

This report shows that we not only honor our founders' mission of creating access where it is not a given, but we also strengthen Erste Group's position as a banking institution that remains open to all parts of society – helping people lead better lives.



Gudrun Egger

Managing Board of ERSTE Foundation



Martin Wohlmuth

Managing Board of ERSTE Foundation



Wolfgang Schopf

Managing Board of ERSTE Foundation

About Us

In 1819, the first Austrian savings bank was founded with a simple but powerful idea, one built on a belief that was ahead of its time: banking should be accessible to all. Its doors were open to everyone, regardless of age, gender, or social status, a progressive step at a time when many were excluded from financial life.

This founding belief has continued to shape Erste Group's development for more than two centuries. It led to the creation of Social Banking, which today stands at the heart of the Group's identity and daily work. Social Banking focuses on supporting initiatives and individuals that often fall outside the reach of traditional banking, including Starting and Micro Entrepreneurs, Social Organisations, and People in Financial Difficulties.

Over time, Social Banking has evolved into a strong and interconnected ecosystem within Erste Group. Dedicated teams in each local bank work alongside the ERSTE Foundation, local bank foundations, specialised entities, and public-private partnerships. Together, they offer responsible banking solutions, financial education, capacity-building, and tailored financial products. Through this approach, Social Banking helps strengthen communities, foster inclusion, and bring Erste Group's purpose to life: advancing financial health for all.

What we stand for

- 1 **Financial Sustainability**
- 2 **Measurable Social Impact**
- 3 **Integration in Core Business**
- 4 **Financial Inclusion**

Our Approach to Social Banking

We support Starting and Micro Entrepreneurs



with

working-capital,
start-up and investment
loans

and offer

training, mentoring
and financial
advisory

to create and preserve jobs

We empower Social Organisations



with

social impact bonds,
quasi-equity and
investment loans

and offer

capacity building
and networking

to expand their social impact

We stand by People in Financial Difficulties



with

special accounts,
housing and education
loans

and offer

debt advisory,
as well as financial
education

to improve their financial health and housing

Social Banking Highlights

Through Social Banking, we turn our purpose into measurable impact by expanding access to financial services, strengthening financial health, and supporting people and organisations in building more resilient futures.

! These and all figures on the following slides have been calculated using the methods described on the "Methodology Notes" slide.

Overall Highlights

61.359

supported clients

111.496

education support beneficiaries

814

mIn EUR of funding provided

110.000+

preserved and created jobs overall

30%

thereof for socially disadvantaged

69%

of clients improved their economic situation

85%

people with low income having better control over own finances

2025 Highlights

9.050

supported clients

20.930

education support beneficiaries

101,4

mIn EUR of funding provided

53%

funding provided to Starting and Micro Entrepreneurs

44%

funding provided to Social Organisations

3%

funding provided to People in Financial Difficulties

Starting and Micro Entrepreneurs

22.996

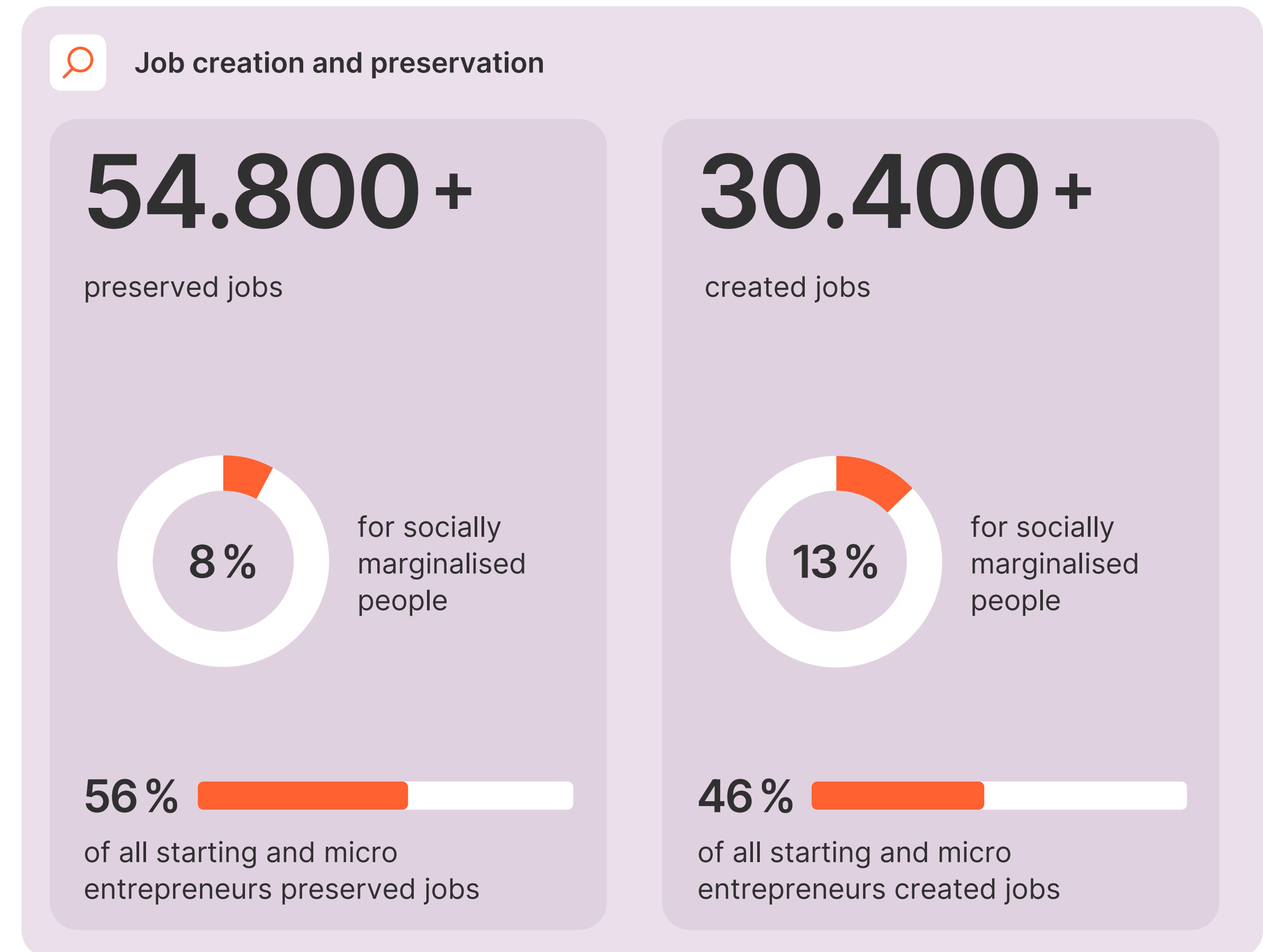
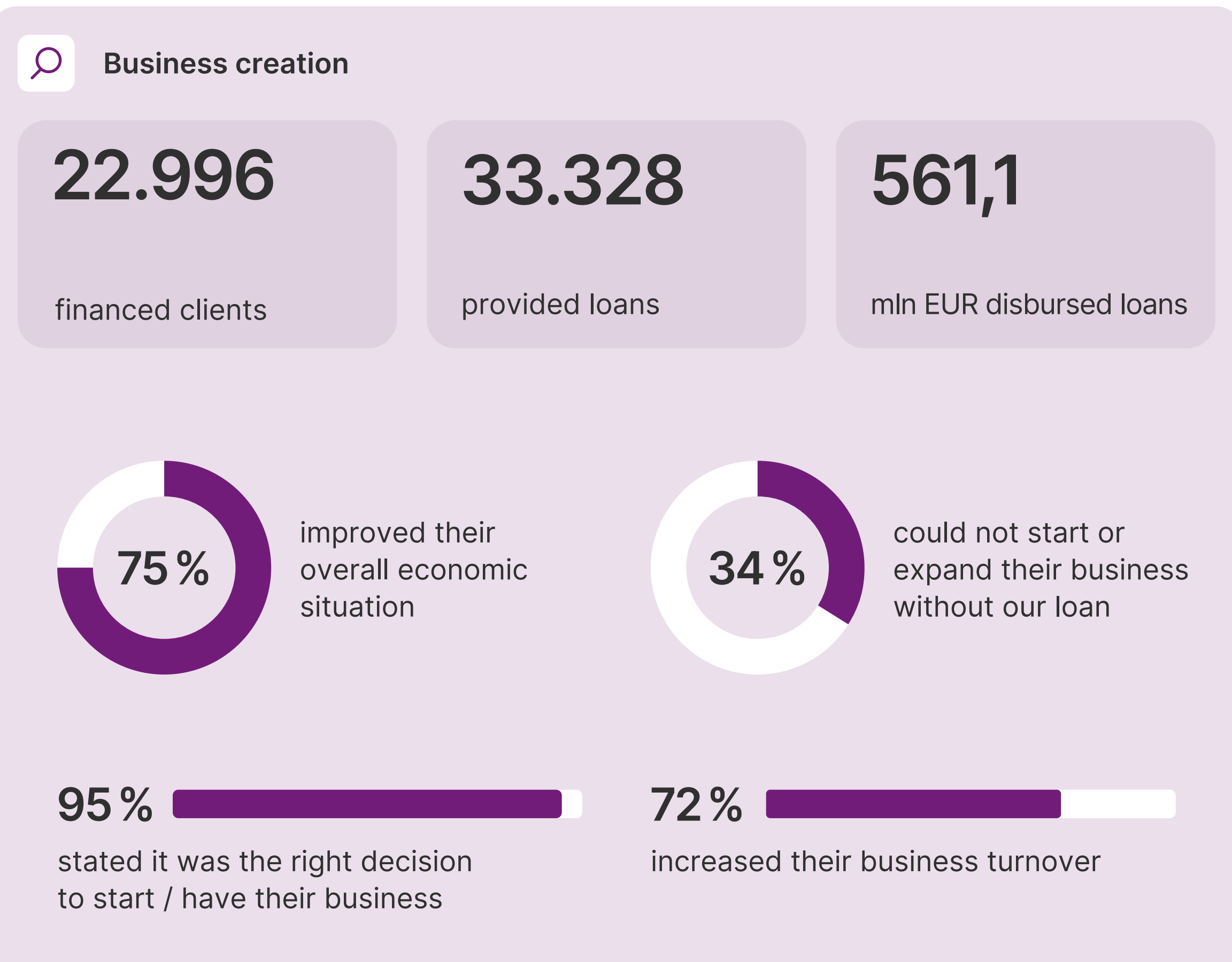
financed clients



📍 Pas Kitchen | Croatia

Driving Entrepreneurship and Job Creation

Through our financing, we enable entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses, strengthen their economic resilience and support the creation and preservation of jobs, particularly for socially marginalised individuals.

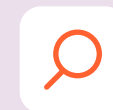
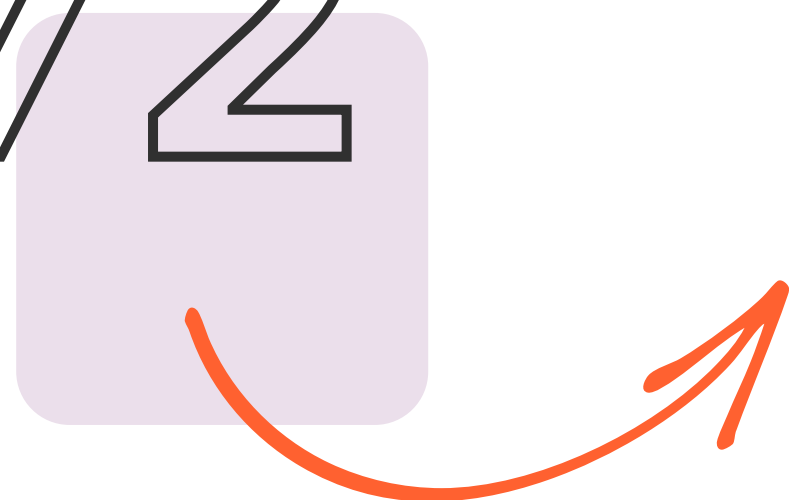


Our Approach to Starting and Micro Entrepreneurs

We support people with ideas but limited opportunities. By offering tailored loans, training, mentoring and local hands-on support, we help starting entrepreneurs and micro businesses turn their potential into steady, sustainable livelihoods.

78.272

attended or received
education support



We helped our clients to

78 %

improve communication and marketing skills

89 %

improve quality of products and services

73 %

expand their networks

94 %

increase sales

82 %

improve business knowledge

88 %

improve financial and business planning skills

99 %

get access to funding

Fostering Prosperity

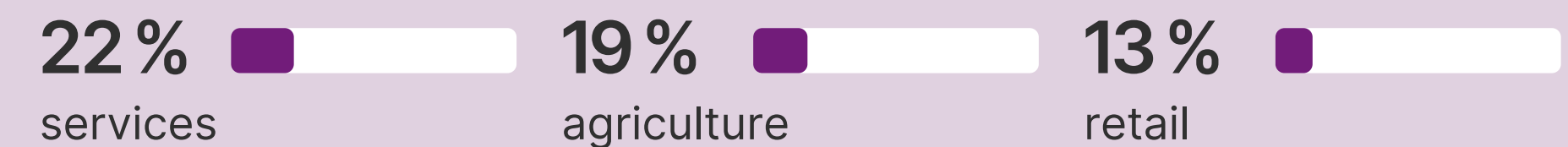
Our support is not only strengthening clients' financial stability, but is also enhancing their personal wellbeing, helping them manage expenses, regain confidence, and build a more optimistic future.



Thanks to our financing our clients



Our clients do business in





Find out more about
[Pas Kitchen](#) →

Visit our webpage and meet
[more of our clients](#) →

Meet Ivan

One of our Starting Entrepreneurs

“Our focus is on developing innovative, healthy recipes whose nutritional quality will protect the health of our furry friends and help them live long and happy lives.”

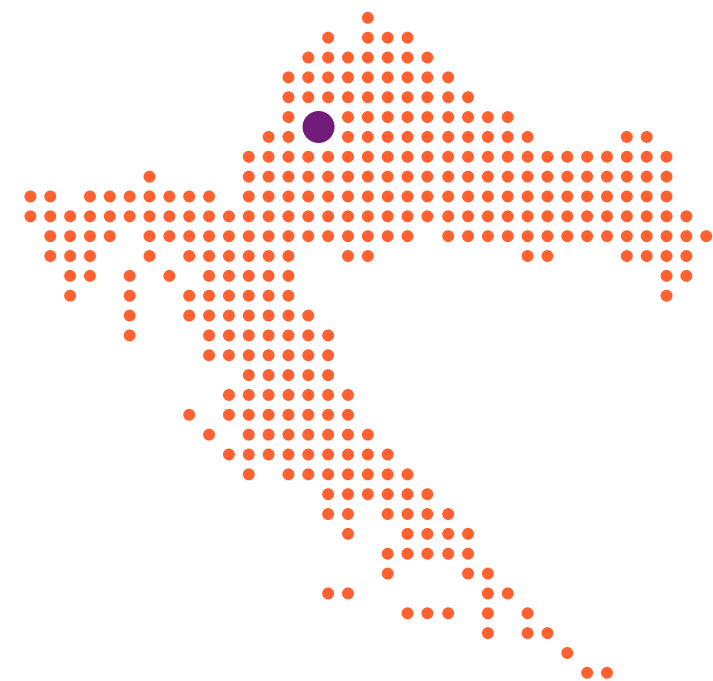
● **Business**

Fresh, personalised and eco-friendly dog food.

● **Pas Kitchen**
Croatia

● **Social Impact**

Creates social impact by improving animal health and wellbeing through fresh, nutritionally balanced, and sustainable pet food, while supporting local farmers and promoting environmentally friendly, insect-based protein innovations that reduce the ecological footprint of pet nutrition.



Social Organisations

1.594

financed clients



📍 Impact Hub Vienna | Austria

Expanding Social Impact

Our financing helps clients strengthen their economic stability, grow their organisations, and create or preserve jobs, including for socially marginalised people, supporting more inclusive local economies.

Economic improvement

1.594

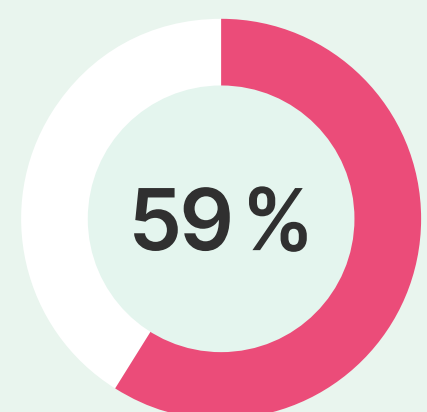
financed clients

2.276

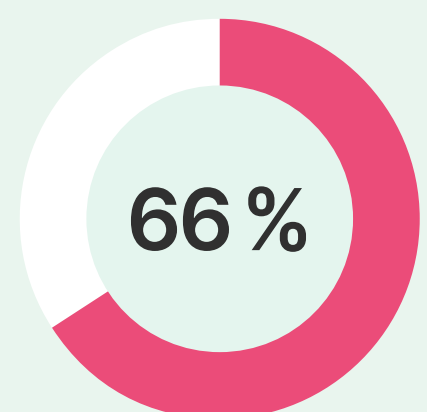
provided loans

249,7

mIn EUR disbursed loans



are in a better economic situation than before



secured sufficient liquidity / working capital

60%

could better overcome current economic difficulties

62%

were able to increase annual turnover

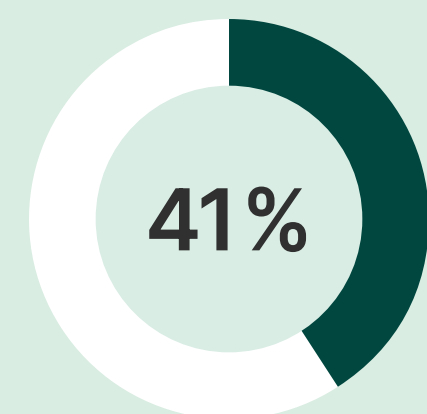
Job creation and preservation

19.000+

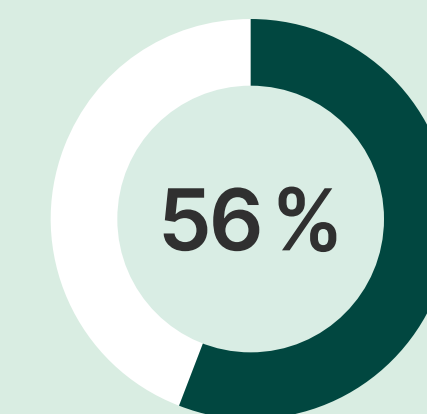
preserved jobs

6.100+

created jobs



for socially marginalised people



for socially marginalised people

53%

of all social organisations preserved jobs

38%

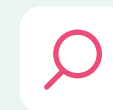
of all social organisations created jobs

Our Approach to Social Organisations

We support social organisations with flexible financing, tailored mentoring and training, helping them strengthen their skills, improve their services, expand their reach, and build scalable, sustainable impact models.

24.658

attended or received
education support



We helped our clients to

78%

improve competencies / know-how of employees

77%

improve quality of products and services

87%

expand their networks

69%

expand the number of beneficiaries

66%

start considering their environmental impact / sustainability

76%

improve their fund-raising skills

85%

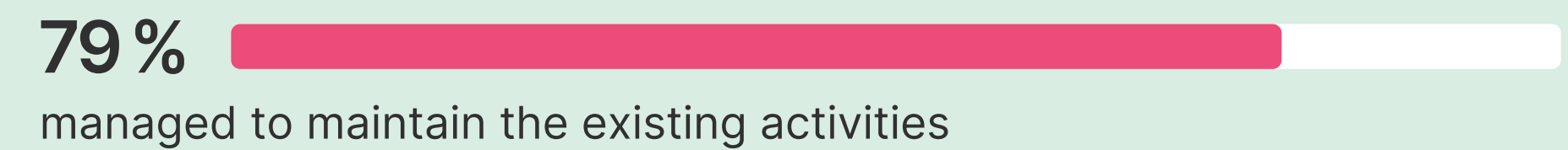
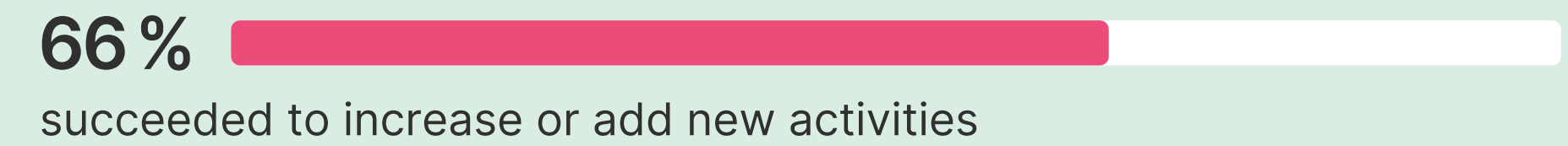
improve their social business or impact model

Advancing Mission and Social Impact

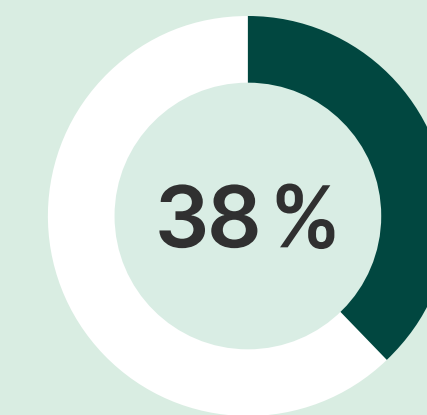
Through our support, organisations are expanding and strengthening their activities, increasing their social impact across health, education, and reducing inequalities, while strong female leadership supports the mission.



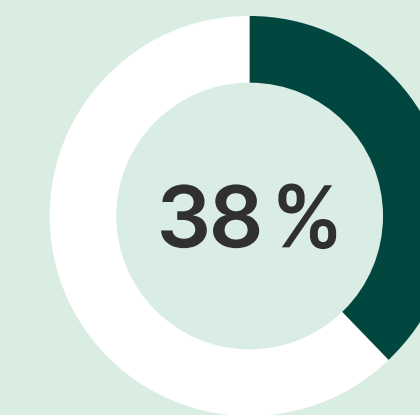
Thanks to our financing our clients



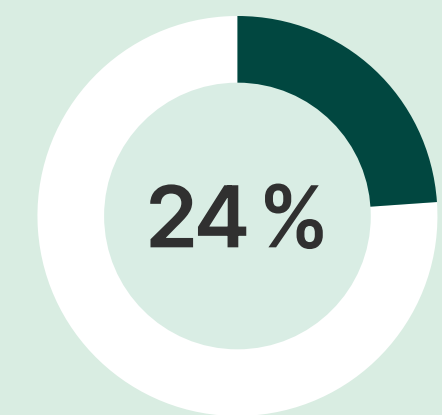
Our clients contribute to



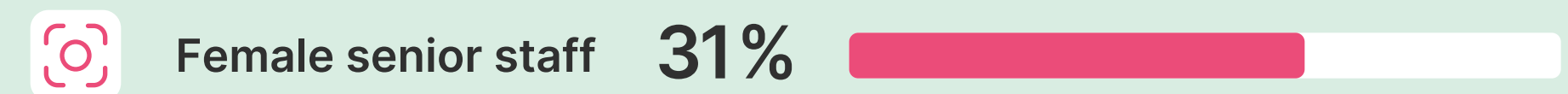
good health and well-being



improvement of quality of education



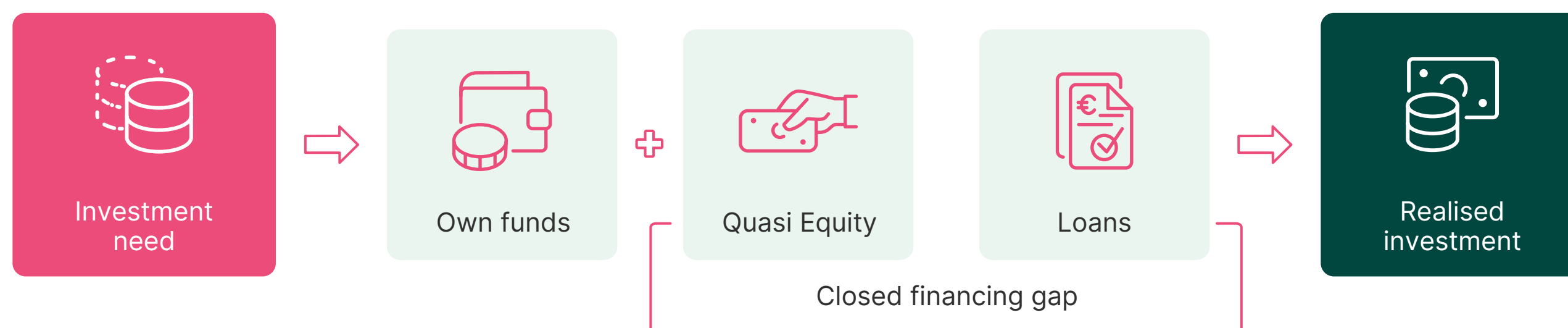
reduction of inequalities



Innovative Financial Instruments

We enable prosperity by expanding access to financial services and strengthening the capacity of social and green enterprises to grow sustainably. We provided flexible, long-term growth capital to enterprises that create jobs and strengthen communities. Our Quasi-Equity model to impact enterprises offers funding without ownership dilution, enabling organisations to scale while preserving their mission.

Scaling Social Organisations



16

clients financed

50%

female managers

3,9

mIn EUR disbursed Quasi-Equity

43%

average turnover growth

67%

improved their economic situation*



Find out more about
[Impact Hub Vienna](#) →

Visit our webpage and meet
[more of our clients](#) →

Meet Matthias, Alexis and Hinnerk

One of the Social Organisations we support

“How can we make society more sustainable and fair, and how can we contribute to that change?”

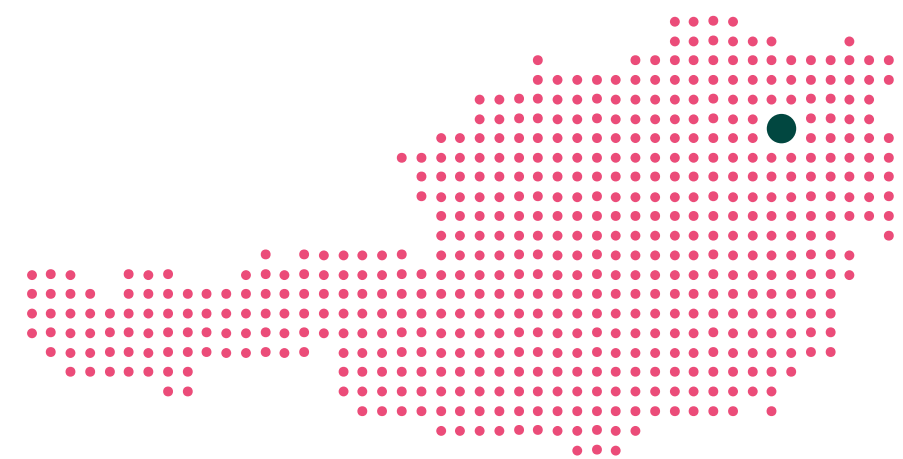
● **Business**

Coworking space, programs and partnerships for social innovation.

● **Impact Hub Vienna
Austria**

● **Social Impact**

Creates social impact by empowering entrepreneurs and fostering innovation in social, climate, and health sectors through collaborative spaces, programs and partnerships that strengthen the broader impact ecosystem.



People in Financial Difficulties

36.769

supported clients



📍 Dostupný Domov | Slovakia

Improving Financial Health and Housing

By providing financial advisory and housing support, we help clients stabilise their finances and improve their living conditions. These results are driven by a range of Social Banking initiatives, including Zweite Sparkasse in Austria and, debt advisory and housing projects in Slovakia for vulnerable clients.


Financial health

8.566


received personal advisory

27.761

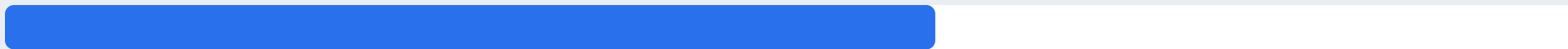
hours of education and advisory provided

91% 

can now pay regular expenses on time

83% 

can now pay debt obligations on time

59% 

stated that their overall debt level rather decreased

Decent housing

2.973

clients supported via housing programs

2.539

people have found a new home

156

housing micro-loans provided

2,3

mIn EUR housing micro-loans

Our Approach to People in Financial Difficulties

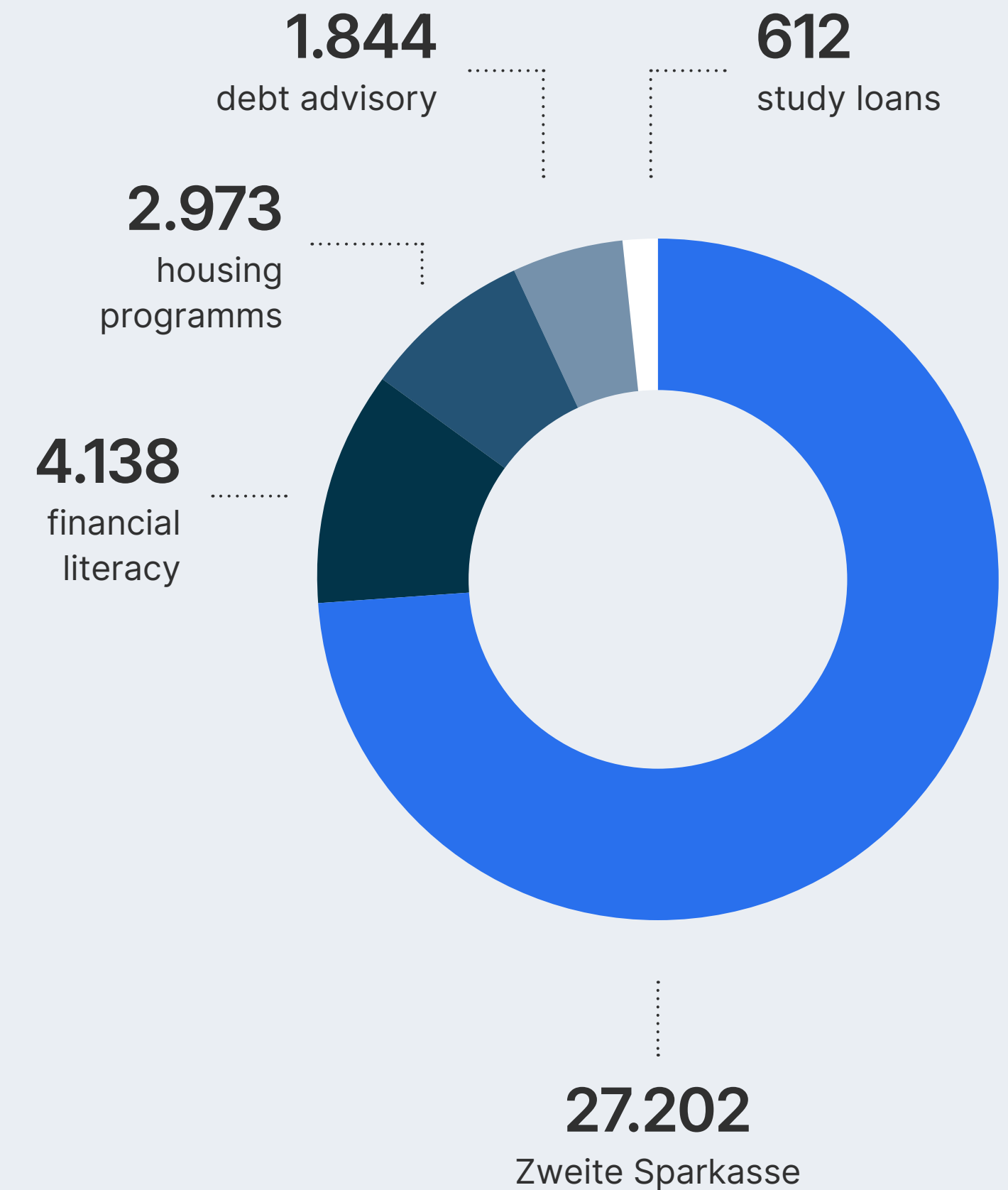
Many people face financial stress, debt, or unstable living conditions, often feeling excluded from the financial system. We support them by offering access to basic banking, personalised debt advice, social housing solutions, and financial education. Our goal is to help people regain stability, confidence and control over their financial lives.

36.769

supported clients



Clients supported via



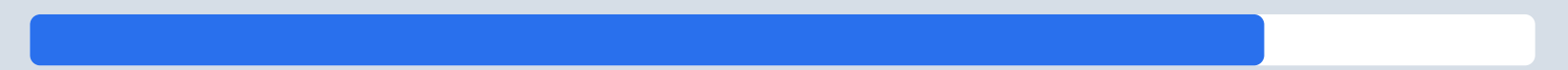
Strengthening Financial Health

Our services empower clients to reduce financial stress, enhance their wellbeing, and build a more positive outlook on their future.



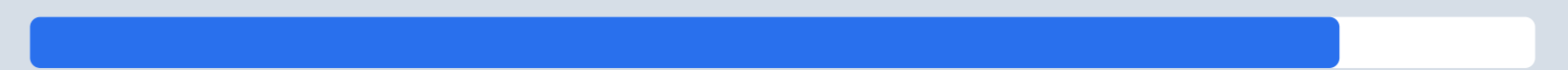
Thanks to our support our clients

82%



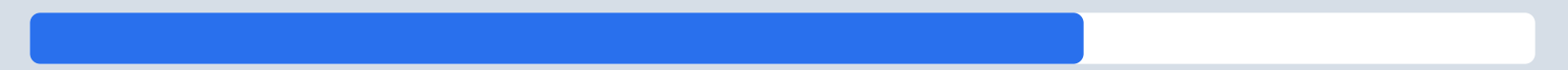
are now less worried about their financial situation

87%



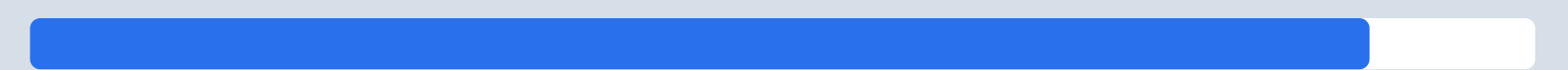
look now more positively towards their future

70%



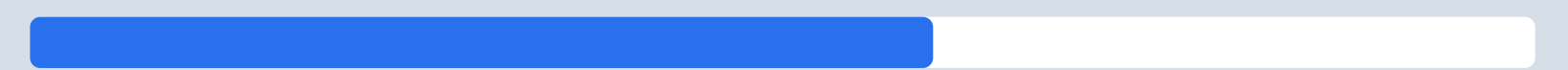
feel healthier

89%



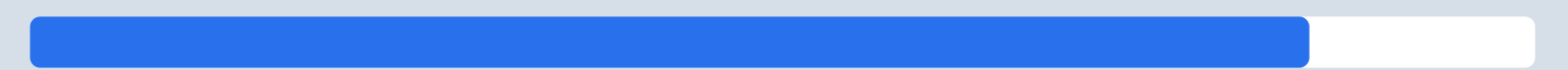
have a better control over their finances

60%



improved their income

85%



got a better overview of their financial situation



Female clients **38%**





Find out more about
[Dostupný Domov](#) →

Visit our webpage and meet
[more of our clients](#) →

Meet Maria

One of Dostupný Domov tenants

The Dostupný Domov apartment with discounted rent was like a light at the end of the tunnel. It provides comfort, privacy and a better study environment for the whole family.

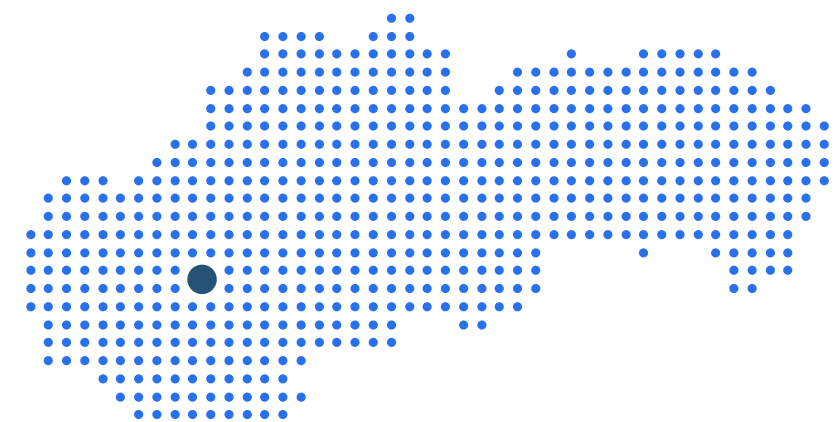
- **Business**

Finding decent housing because of difficult financial situation.

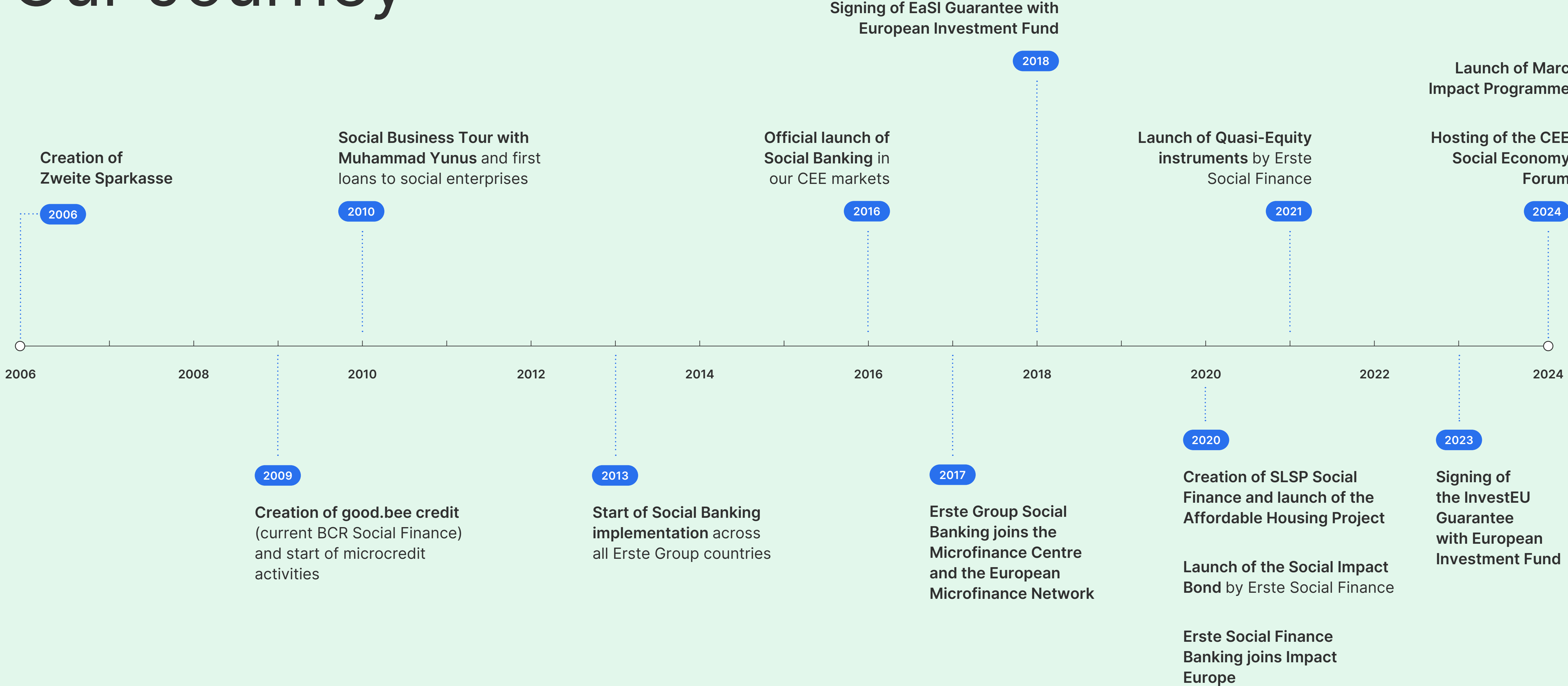
- **Dostupný Domov**
Slovakia

- **Social Impact**

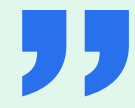
Affordable housing is provided to vulnerable groups, helping them gain stability, confidence, and opportunities for integration.



Our Journey



Voices of our Social Bankers



Today, we manage over EUR 100 million in assets for micro businesses, NGOs, farmers, social enterprises, and students, reaching more than 5.000 clients. Social finance allows us to support Romania's development and wellbeing. For me, it is the privilege of combining purpose and vision to build meaningful change.



Ștefan Buciu
Head of Social Banking, BCR
CEO, BCR Social Finance



Awareness of Social Banking has grown across Česká spořitelna and beyond. We support social enterprises and non-profits not just with financing, but also through mentoring and community-building programmes like the Marc Impact Programme. Helping meaningful projects thrive is becoming a natural part of how we work.



Veronika Markova
Head of Social Banking
Česká spořitelna



Social Banking in Austria has grown from a niche to an essential part of our financial landscape, promoting inclusion and dignity. At Zweite Sparkasse, we see people rebuilding their confidence, not just financial cases. Social Banking brings the true heart of banking to life: trust, empowerment, and real impact.



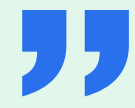
Carmencita Nader
Head of Social Banking, Erste Bank Austria
Board Member Zweite Sparkasse



Across our countries, our Social Banking teams are driven by a simple truth: banking is about people. We stand beside those who dream, rebuild, and create change in their communities. I am proud of what we've built and even more excited for everything still ahead.



Peter Šurek
Head of Social Banking, Erste Group
CEO, Erste Social Finance



Since 2015, we have gone far beyond traditional banking in Hungary. With more than EUR 17 million financed and initiatives in capacity building, financial literacy, and social housing, we work to strengthen NGOs and communities. Our partnerships are built on trust and shared purpose, and we are eager to continue this journey.



Orsolya Szalay
Head of Social Banking
Erste Bank Hungary



After a decade, I can claim that Erste was built with the heart combined with strong business and financial acumen. This was confirmed in practice. Erste created an exceptional banking system that delivers sound financial results even though it is focused on clients that are usually “non-bankable” in the CEE region.



Rastislav Blažej
Head of Social Banking
Slovenská sporiteľňa



Since 2016, Social Banking in Serbia has supported over 700 entrepreneurs and provided training to more than 7.000 individuals. We are also the only bank offering tailored financing to non-profits, investing more than EUR 1,8 million in the sector. Our mission is to keep strengthening communities and creating lasting positive impact.



Ivan Radojević
Head of Social Banking
Erste Bank Serbia



Building Social Banking in Croatia was a long and challenging journey, but we created something meaningful for over 1.000 clients. This success is the result of a small, dedicated team that believed in the vision and built it from the ground up. We remain the only bank offering such support and the road ahead is full of potential.



Tina Sirotić
Head of Social Banking
Erste Bank Croatia

Theory of Change and Impact Assessment Framework

At Social Banking, we believe that finance can be a force for good, especially when it supports people and organisations that are often financially excluded by traditional banking systems. Translating this ambition into sustainable impact requires a structured approach to understanding how our activities generate change.

Our Theory of Change, developed in collaboration with the Institute for Nonprofit Management and Governance at Vienna University of Economics and Business, provides such a framework. It links our financial and non-financial support to measurable outcomes across economic resilience, social sector development, and financial health, enabling us to assess our contribution to lasting social value.

As part of our mission to provide financial health for all, the 2025 Social Banking Impact Report provides a transparent view of our impact pathways. It links our activities to concrete outputs, the volume of financial and non-financial support provided, and to outcomes reflecting changes in people's lives, organisational stability, and business development across our core client groups: Starting and Micro Entrepreneurs, Social Organisations and People in Financial Difficulties.

To measure this impact consistently across countries and client groups, we apply the Erste Group Social Banking Impact Assessment Methodology. Every two years, we collect data directly and anonymously from our clients across seven countries in Central and Eastern Europe using a standardised questionnaire. This enables us to systematically track our activities, outputs, and outcomes over time and ensure comparability of results.

Further details on our Impact Assessment Methodology, including information on data sources, survey design, and calculation approaches, are provided in the Methodology Notes.

Supported United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:



Methodology Notes

1 Survey

Social Banking Impact report is based on a random sample of 1.266 Social Banking clients (thereof 777 starting entrepreneurs and microentrepreneurs, 331 social organisations and 158 people in financial difficulties) that have been telephonically interviewed in 2025 in 7 core markets of Erste Group (Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia).

Percentage data in the report are based on responses of the random sample of interviewed Social Banking clients in the survey (page 5 indicate all interviewed clients, while pages 6–21 indicate all clients within the indicated customer segment, with the exception of 2025 Social Banking highlights).

2 Internal Data

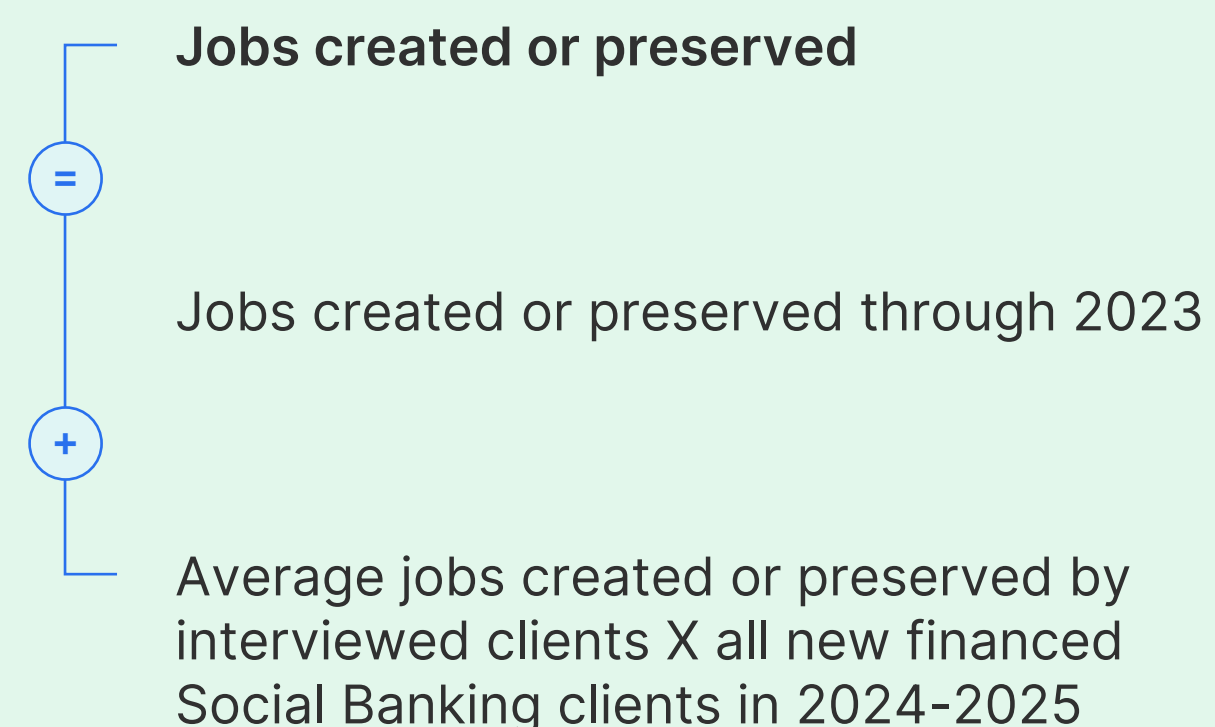
Absolute figures in the report such as number of clients, volume / number of disbursed loans, number of education participants (with the exception of number of preserved or created jobs) in the report are exact figures based on the local internal bank business reports.

Absolute figures in pages with a tag **Overall** represent the cumulative result since the launch of Social Banking in 2016.

3 Calculation

The number of newly created or preserved jobs is calculated in two steps. First, the average number of jobs per client based on survey responses is determined. Then this average is multiplied by the total number of new financed clients within each segment, country, and timeframe.

The overall number of created and preserved jobs is determined using the following formula:



About this report

This report covers the following entities, which together make up the Social Banking and Social Finance ecosystem within the Erste universe. Each plays a distinct role while contributing to a shared mission.

1 **Erste Group Social Banking** (fully integrated departments)

Our main Social Banking activities are carried out by dedicated units in each of our seven core markets – Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. These fully consolidated departments combine traditional banking services with non-financial support. Activities across countries are coordinated and steered by a Erste Group Social Banking team.

2 **Erste Social Finance • BCR Social Finance • SLSP Social Finance** (special purpose vehicles)

In several markets, we have established specialised entities to pilot initiatives that may be more difficult to integrate into a publicly listed bank at an early stage due to their risk-return profile. These special purpose vehicles aim to be financially self-sustaining while reinvesting any profits into social activities. They complement our Social Banking departments by testing innovative, higher-risk financing and investment approaches, along with non-financial support and capacity building. These entities include direct or indirect shareholdings by ERSTE Foundation.

3 **Zweite Sparkasse** (separate legal entity founded and managed by Erste Group)

Zweite Sparkasse, officially known as Die Zweite Wiener Vereins-Sparcasse, is a social banking initiative in Austria founded in 2006 by Erste Group and ERSTE Foundation. Operating on a non-profit basis, its mission is to help people in financial distress regain access to basic banking services and stabilize their economic situation. Often described as a “bank for people without a bank,” it offers essential services such as no-overdraft accounts, debit cards, and payment transactions. Clients are referred exclusively through partner organisations like debt counseling services and charities. While a separate legal entity, Zweite Sparkasse is entirely run by approximately 360 volunteers from Erste Group.

4 **ERSTE Foundation** (core shareholder of Erste Group)

While the Foundation’s direct philanthropic work (such as donations) is not included in this report, ERSTE Foundation plays a central role in shaping and supporting our Social Banking and Social Finance efforts. As the core shareholder of Erste Group, it helps ensure that social values remain embedded in the bank’s strategy and operations. The Foundation is also a key investor in Social Finance entities, provided the initial capital for Zweite Sparkasse, and supports various capacity-building and financial education initiatives across the region.

Erste Group Social Banking Team

The Social Banking team at Erste Group supports local Social Banking units, builds international partnerships, steers strategy, and develops innovative financial instruments to create opportunities for people and organisations often left behind.



Peter Šurek
Head of Group Social Banking

peter.surek@erstegroup.com



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Data Management Expert

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