



SWEDD

AUTONOMISATION
DES FEMMES ET
DIVIDENDE
DEMOGRAPHIQUE
AU SAHEL

SAHEL WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT
AND
DEMOGRAPHIC
DIVIDEND



SWEDD SERIES: BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

ENGAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS AND TRADITIONAL LEADERS

The research informing this Guide was led by the Johns Hopkins University and relates to the SWEDD project. The information will guide the implementation of SWEDD+



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The project covers countries in West and Central Africa

■ SWEDD (2015–2024) ■ SWEDD+ (2024–2028) ■ SWEDD & SWEDD+

Consideration of the role of religion and tradition is critical in efforts to promote the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women and the demographic dividend in the Sahel. Religious beliefs, norms and practices play an important and complex role in the choices and behaviour of individuals and communities. From its inception in 2017, the SWEDD project found it crucial to rely on the religious leaders and traditional chiefs of the countries in order to strengthen or support arguments in favour of human dignity and freedom, including gender equality.





This guide aims to provide information on the implementation process, promising practices and lessons learned from the engagement of religious and traditional leaders in promoting women's empowerment and the demographic dividend in three SWEDD project countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Chad.

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Successful partnerships between traditional and religious actors generally involve a multi-dimensional approach specific to the context, and include:

- 1 a recruitment and/or mapping phase;
- 2 training and capacity building through study tours;
- 3 the development and adoption of documents for advocacy and social and behaviour change communication (SBCC).

Sample: Coordinators of SWEDD Project Management Units (PMUs), staff of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), religious and traditional leaders, and representatives of certain ministries in 3 SWEDD countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Chad

Main data sources:

- ① **Document review:** Projects reports, meeting notes; Mapping of existing religious and traditional leaders in the country; Terms of reference for NGO activities
- ② **Semi-structured key informant interviews:** SWEDD PMU coordinators; NGO staff; religious and traditional leaders; representatives of certain ministries

Methodology for data collection: Qualitative survey with interview guide, including audio recording and note-taking

Analysis methodology: Triangulation of information (verbatim transcriptions, notes and documents, etc.)

Date: February - March 2023

See the annexes for more details on methodology and sampling.

MAPPING AND/OR RECRUITMENT OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND TRADITIONAL CHIEFS

The influence of religious leaders and traditional chiefs on the promotion of women's empowerment and the demographic dividend depends mainly on the extent of their sociological spheres of action and the effectiveness of the organisation of their networks of influence. In the initial stages of the project, the PMUs undertook a mapping of religious leaders and traditional chiefs to document how they are organised and thus identify the extent of their spheres of influence.

In Niger, in 2018 the PMU worked with the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralisation, which manages religious issues and traditional chieftaincy, to establish and support the network of religious and traditional leaders as part of the SWEDD project. To this end, the PMU wrote to the various Muslim and Christian religious associations to share names of all their members among whom five would be selected. For the network of traditional leaders, the Ministry asked the Association of Traditional Leaders of Niger (ACTN) to appoint the members of the network directly. The aim of creating this network is to have credible actors who can raise public awareness.



The ARSIP was identified because it is the only umbrella organisation that brings together all the religious associations in Côte d'Ivoire, and this information was confirmed during our baseline survey (situational analysis). The ARSIP is appropriately structured, both legally and organisationally. It deals with themes linked to those of SWEDD. Therefore, given all these aspects, we signed an agreement with the ARSIP that included specific actions to support the activities of the SWEDD Project.

Respondent, Côte d'Ivoire



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Religious leaders were recruited in Côte d'Ivoire through the Alliance des Religieux contre le VIH/SIDA et les autres Pandémies en Côte d'Ivoire (ARSIP) (Alliance of Religious Leaders against HIV/AIDS and other Pandemics in Côte d'Ivoire), following a procurement process based on the "direct agreement" method. The main task was to monitor the commitments of religious and traditional leaders to the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and the empowerment of girls and women in order to support the implementation of the SWEDD project in Côte d'Ivoire.



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“Despite its mass adherence to so-called “revealed” religions, Chadian society as a whole remains very attached to its traditional practices. Initiation, excision, scarification, etc. are practised in most parts of the country. Supported by certain customary, traditional and religious authorities (who consider themselves to be the guarantors of tradition), these practices seem increasingly entrenched in the customs of certain populations (...). To combat them, these same authorities must be involved.”

Government respondent, Chad



The involvement of traditional and religious leaders in Chad was the responsibility of the Ministry of Planning, the lead ministry for the SWEDD project, through the Directorate of Population and Human Development (DPDH). They are involved in advocacy and awareness-raising during communication campaigns for social and behavioural change (SBCC), in collaboration with the SWEDD PMU. A critical step was to bring together all the faith-based associations, networks and entities under a platform known as the “Chad Inter-Religious Platform”.



LESSON 1: Conduct a rigorous mapping of these guarantors of tradition and culture, i.e. religious and traditional chiefs, to learn how their networks are organised and how they operate.

This exercise enables religious and traditional communities and their leaders and chiefs to express their views on issues related to the promotion of women's empowerment and the demographic dividend in general, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and gender equality. This exercise also makes it possible to identify leaders who could be champions, and to facilitate the acceptance and promotion of sexual and reproductive rights by religious and traditional leaders in the SWEDD target countries.

However, the process of mapping and involving religious and traditional leaders in SWEDD activities varies from country to country. While the PMUs in Niger and Chad relied on their line ministries, the PMU in Côte d'Ivoire used “direct procurement”. No one method was considered better than the others. All countries undertook this process of identifying, nominating and garnering the support of religious leaders as champions. In addition, women's faith-based

community groups demonstrated their ability to increase awareness, understanding and uptake of SRH services in Niger.

However, their number is still insufficient and suggests the need, for all SWEDD countries, for thorough knowledge through a rigorous mapping of these key actors. This starts with research to gain a better understanding of the politico-cultural-religious landscape affecting the adoption of SRH activities, as well as the objectives of the project in general in the intervention areas of the countries. This should be followed by the identification, appointment and support of religious champions in each country. It is also important to identify the knowledge and needs of these stakeholders in relation to the objectives and expectations of the SWEDD project.

PHASE

2

GUIDANCE AND TRAINING FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND TRADITIONAL CHIEFS

Faith-based organisations form a vast and complex tapestry, with diverse mandates, missions, competencies, services and ways of working, ranging from action for SRH and the empowerment of women and young girls to action against them. At the same time, there are many misconceptions in all countries. These are based on incorrect information and/or incorrect interpretations concerning faith and SRH services. Some religious actors consider that secular groups are seeking to impose new “Western” values to supplant traditions developed over centuries (Adedini et al., 2015). Distrust is common, as is the fear of being manipulated to advance outside agendas rather than respected as an equal partner in advancing the best interests of the community (Marshall, 2015). Other problems that often arise with faith-based and traditional groups are: disagreements over “acceptable” contraceptive methods; the equal participation and representation of women and young people; and the avoidance of issues relating to adolescent sexuality, particularly among unmarried young people. Guidance and training for religious leaders and traditional chiefs has enabled them to play their role as agents of change more effectively.



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In all countries, there are many misconceptions about faith, sexual and reproductive health services and women's empowerment. In this context, the guidance and training of religious and traditional leaders has helped them to play a more effective role as agents and vectors of change.



Family photo taken during training for religious leaders in Egypt

In April 2018, Al Azhar University in Egypt hosted a 10-day training course for Muslim religious leaders from SWEDD beneficiary countries on topics relating to girls' sexual health and empowerment. The training took the form of lectures and book exchanges on a range of issues including the demographic dividend, child marriage and family planning.

During the training course in Egypt, participating religious leaders suggested drawing up a roadmap for their organisation. To do this, they organised another trip, from 7 to 10 May 2018, this time to Mauritania, funded by the SWEDD project. There they drew up their action plan, which they then sent back to the Ministries of the Interior and Population and to the SWEDD project. Another training course was held in Mauritania from 12 to 15 February 2019. The workshop focused on capacity building for Muslim religious leaders from SWEDD member countries in a number of areas. These include combating child marriage, promoting girls' education, empowering women and spacing births. After these regional training sessions, the various delegations adopted different approaches to utilise the lessons learned once they returned to their respective countries.

Before returning home, the religious leaders from Niger organised themselves into a committee to better structure their future actions. The key contact at the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralisation was appointed chairman. The two women on the delegation were responsible for discussing with communities the role of Islam in women's lives (the place of women in Islam, family planning in Islam). Academics were responsible for proposing training modules. A document was developed and signed by all stakeholders, and submitted to the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralisation.



Training for religious leader champions in RH/FP 29 April to 03 May 2019, Boundiali
Source: SWEDD Côte d'Ivoire project report

The SWEDD project also organized two training sessions for traditional leaders from Niger in Maradi and Dosso. These training sessions enhanced capacity building for traditional chiefs in the areas covered by the SWEDD project by improving their understanding of population and development issues with a view to capturing the demographic dividend.

Other objectives included familiarising leaders with the main concepts of the demographic dividend, encouraging them to take

concrete action on population and development issues, and drawing up a draft action plan. The action plan will be implemented by the Association of Traditional Chiefs of Niger (ACTN) in partnership with the SWEDD project. The aim is to bring about social and behavioural change, particularly in rural areas. Following these various training courses, ACTN, with the participation of the Ministry of Population, drew up an action plan at a total cost of 150 million CFA francs. However, this plan has not yet been financed by the SWEDD project.

Religious leaders have also started capacity-building training with their peers. These activities were the personal initiatives of the organisers, and did not necessarily engage SWEDD partners, thus making it challenging to monitor them. A training workshop held in Niamey in September 2021 focused on the involvement of religious and community leaders in promoting girls' education and combating gender-based violence (GBV). A total of eight leaders attended the workshop, six Muslims and two Christians. At the end of the workshop, the participants signed a declaration of commitment to the education of young girls and the fight against GBV.



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These religious and traditional leaders use a number of channels to share their experiences with their peers and to put into practice the ideas they have learnt during their training courses. Religious leaders run experience-sharing workshops with their peers and students on topics covering menstrual hygiene, child marriage, women's empowerment and advocacy with major religious leaders. Their participation in these meetings and initiatives has earned them a number of awards.

Another religious leader has made progress on the basis of these teachings in her Koranic school in Maradi by getting female students to discuss the SWEDD project themes. Engaging women through formal and informal religious structures has proved effective in increasing acceptance of family planning (Adedini et al., 2015; World Faiths Development Dialogue, 2017).

“.....

We are raising women's awareness. They are being taught religion. And we take the opportunity to raise their awareness with Koranic verses and hadiths, so that they understand that Islam is not about suffering.

Religious leader, Niger

”.....



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A canton chief in the Maradi region has undertaken a number of initiatives with his citizens. With regard to the education of girls, he has started a programme to voluntarily re-enrol any girl who has dropped out of school in an examination class. He explained that:



In 2020, we brought back 113 girls, and all the girls who volunteered to go back to school were re-enrolled. And in 2021, we will have brought 163 girls back to school. The girls benefited greatly from this. And this is the only programme of its kind in Niger.

Traditional leader, Niger



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The training of religious and traditional leaders in Côte d'Ivoire was on the agenda of the SWEDD project. The training sessions were therefore organised according to the needs expressed, but above all in line with the SWEDD themes.

From the start of the project, a training session was organised in Yamoussoukro with all the religious leader-champions identified during the stakeholder mapping on the SWEDD themes, including the promotion of SRH. Following this training session, the new SRH trainers in turn led cascade training sessions for their peers, religious leaders and traditional chiefs in the regions covered by the project. To achieve this, the training manual was revised and the messages and approaches were standardised with the support and supervision of the PMU. ARSIP's Executive Director explained their approach: *"The project covered 5 regions, and we know that our champions couldn't cover the whole area. So, to ensure that the message is heard to the last mile, our strategy was to cascade training to religious guides and traditional chiefs. The content of the training courses was updated to reflect the objectives of the SWEDD project. The training manual was revised with the support and supervision of the PMU"* (ARSIP respondent). She also noted: *"We have a training manual with our messages and approaches. But with the SWEDD project, it needed to be reviewed and some additions were required. This provided us with a well-designed tool, in which the messages were standardised and the distribution method was defined"*.



LESSON 2: Provide training and/or capacity-building for traditional and religious leaders both at home and abroad.

During these training sessions, the SWEDD project objectives and missions were presented to them. The leaders had the opportunity to discuss issues relating to reproductive health and the empowerment of women in their country and in the context of their religion. They benefited from capacity-building to help them strengthen their support for arguments in favour of human dignity and freedom, especially with regard to gender equality in their countries.



LESSON 3: Encouraging religious and traditional leaders to share their experiences with those from other countries also proves very productive.

As interpretations of most religious traditions transcend national boundaries, exchange visits, conferences and other forms of peer learning have been important motivating factors. Cross-border exchange visits made it possible to involve religious communities in the promotion of family planning, establish useful links and launch dialogues between religious leaders, government and civil society.



LESSON 4: Address the challenges faced by some religious and traditional leaders, which prevent greater involvement in SWEDD activities.

There are many misconceptions about faith and SRH services. Some traditional and religious actors still have preconceived ideas, often seeing the influence of faith as an obstacle to SRH and the empowerment of women and young people. A religious ban on family planning exists in some places, partly because of the spread of these misconceptions. In the absence of accurate information and without appreciation of traditional beliefs, religious leaders may oppose SRH activities, particularly family planning. It is essential to help religious leaders understand how all methods of contraception work and the associated health, social and economic benefits. It is therefore imperative that examples of good practice or tried and tested approaches (to be demonstrated by rigorous evaluation) are promoted.

PHASE

3

ACTIVITIES OF RELIGIOUS AND TRADITIONAL LEADERS

DEVELOPMENT OF A GUIDE AND OTHER SUPPORT

Religious leaders in SWEDD countries received accurate information through training courses where they acquired appropriate knowledge on reproductive health (RH)/family planning (FP). They then took an active part in developing, validating and disseminating certain policy documents among their peers in order to disseminate messages on gender equity and SRH in Islam for young people and adolescents.

In Niger, in close collaboration with interfaith forums and their designated champions, the PMU has developed and disseminated resources with a predominantly Islamic perspective to guide dialogue with religious leaders on gender equity, family and marriage, FP, violence against women and children's fundamental human rights. Two resources in particular have been produced:

- ▶ **A set of Islamic arguments on gender equity** which aims to combat the stereotypes propagated by conservatives who hinder women's rights through misconceptions about the content of the Holy Koran. A number of themes were addressed, including women's rights in Islam, FP, equity, etc.
- ▶ **A guide to SRH for young people and adolescents and gender equity in Islam.** This provides an ideal framework for disseminating the principles of Islam and sound scientific information on sexual and reproductive health, with a view to raising awareness in Muslim communities.

These and other such resources help Christian and Islamic clerics and leaders to better promote the health and social benefits of family planning as part of their services. Interfaith forums have taken steps to train clergy in these resources in order to broaden support and ensure that family planning is integrated into regular activities, public gatherings and events, to broadcast statements of support on the radio, and to improve media discourse on family planning. These forums are registered with the government as autonomous organisations promoting faith-based advocacy of family planning.

The religious leaders of Côte d'Ivoire first produced advocacy tools called "*RAPID Religieux*" in which they explained their choice of the term "*responsible procreation*" to represent the idea of family planning as, for those who are religious, the term responsible procreation is in line with the ethics and religious morality of which they consider themselves to be the guarantors. Responsible procreation in the religious sense therefore means refusing to use abortion methods, which are often mentioned in family planning documents. As an Ivory Coast Imam explained to us in an interview, "*We talk about responsible procreation because we promote reversible methods for young people and married people, not irreversible methods or abortions. Also, for young people who are not of marriageable age or who are not yet married, the term "abstinence" is used. Our approach is in line with religious texts*". RAPID also describes the commitment of the religious leaders to responsible procreation and the various arguments in favour of responsible procreation.



LESSON 5: Establish and promote, at regional and country level, a database of guidance documents and of communication and policy materials.

It is essential to establish and promote regional and national databases of these guides and the communication and policy materials produced by religious and traditional leaders. They can serve as a model for other Sahelian countries. It is therefore important to allocate sufficient time, budget and human resources to developing and documenting these materials. A proper analysis of these documents is also essential, as is an evaluation of their relevance and impact on the populations they serve.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The national media campaigns on social behaviour change communication (SBCC) run by the SWEDD project focus on four themes. These include reproductive health, enrolling and retaining girls in school, child marriage and empowering women and girls. They target a primary demographic of pre-adolescent and adolescent girls aged 10 to 19 and women aged 19 to 49, and a secondary group of men aged 15 to 59.

In Côte d'Ivoire, based on guidelines, ARSIP's role was in line with the beliefs of all the country's major religious denominations. The SWEDD PMU provides technical and financial support to ARSIP. This support enables it to act as an oversight body, ensuring that the commitments made by religious leaders in terms of promotion and repositioning of the SWEDD themes as being consistent with their religion are effectively implemented.

SBCC activities are organised with religious representatives. For Muslim communities, awareness-raising messages are broadcast during Friday sermons and wedding and baptism ceremonies. They are also broadcast during individual or couple counselling sessions to encourage social behaviour change in communities. The same communication channels are used by the Christian community to promote



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FP among their community. The experience with traditional chiefs seems more challenging because the communication channels are less well established. Target populations, especially men, are hard to reach.

In Chad, in 2017, the PMU carried out an initial campaign comprising four advocacy sessions with the support of religious and traditional “*Champions*” for traditional and religious leaders in Salamat province. The sessions dealt with issues relating to reproductive health (RH), early marriage and women's empowerment. The PMU also organised two televised talk shows with the support of experts and religious leaders on the benefits of birth spacing and the importance of keeping girls in school. The aim was to raise the level of knowledge in communities about the widespread use of modern contraceptive methods to promote family well-being.



Launch of the SBCC 2020 national campaign
Source: SWEDD Chad project report

With the support of traditional and religious leaders, the second campaign, which took place in 2020 in Am Timan (Salamat province), aimed to highlight the factors that facilitate girls' education, as well as constraints that need to be addressed. The campaign was an opportunity to hear from female role models on female education, leadership and entrepreneurship, while highlighting the challenges faced by other women facing challenges in these areas. It was therefore an ideal opportunity to highlight innovative strategies for strengthening girls' education and women's leadership at national, regional and community level.

At the end of the 2021 communication campaign, mass communication activities engaging traditional and religious leaders were organised through communication campaigns in the four former provinces (Lac, Hadjer Lamis, Kanem and Salamat). The Stronger Together 2022 campaign covered the four southern provinces (Chari-Baguirmi, Mayo Kebbé East, Mayo Kebbi West and Tandjilé) and media activities at national level, as well as the project's eight other provinces (Lac, Kanem, Hadjer Lamis, Salamat, Batha, Ennedi West, Wadi-Fira and Borkou).

Finally, the Stronger Together 2022 campaign achieved significant results in all three countries, thanks to a combination of communication approaches. The campaign also used several channels to reach religious, traditional and community leaders (around 5,989 in Chad alone) who expressed their support for the SWEDD vision.



LESSON 6: Promote the involvement of religious and traditional leaders in the project's SBCC activities.

They are often the most respected figures in their communities, and play an important role in shaping attitudes, opinions and behaviour, because their members trust them. At family and community level, these leaders have the ability to raise awareness and influence attitudes, behaviours and practices. They can shape social values in line with religious and cultural teachings that are consistent with values of equity and gender, human rights, women's and children's rights. However, it should be noted that as the activities of the SBCC are cross-cutting, several other governmental or non-governmental organisations call on the same religious or traditional leaders in certain areas where the SWEDD project is active. Hence it is important to identify and provide on specific SWEDD activities to improve monitoring and evaluation.

PHASE

4

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND TRADITIONAL CHIEFS

There is an impressive and growing body of evidence, and growing engagement of religious and/or traditional leaders, that have helped to reduce some misconceptions. However, there is little published research evaluating the effectiveness of their activities (Marshall, 2015; Walsh et al., 2018). It is essential to identify the types of involvement of religious and traditional figures that are effective. Issues relating to the content and choice of advocacy programmes, as well as the limited experience of monitoring and documentation among these faith-based and traditional groups, make monitoring and evaluation a concern and a challenge.

Indeed, one of the weak points of the involvement of religious and traditional leaders is the lack of relevant data on the performance of these leaders in their respective countries as part of the SWEDD project. For example, specific SBCC activities were implemented differently in each country. And while the involvement of religious and traditional leaders has helped to break down harmful perceptions, norms and traditions there is no rigorous evidence to support the claims of the participants we interviewed.

The involvement of trained leaders and chiefs must also be sustained so that their attitudes and communication with the members of their communities continue to reinforce what they have learnt during their training. The main obstacle to success is the lack of resources for activities by traditional and religious leaders for initiatives in support and promotion of SRH and empowerment of women.

Overall, the qualitative data demonstrates that the major influence of SBCC campaigns on target populations is largely due to the commitment of religious and traditional leaders. However, interviews with religious and traditional leaders show that more needs to be done to ensure that they engage effectively. These leaders feel that they are only involved in national SBCC campaigns and that they lack

The involvement of religious and traditional leaders has helped to break down harmful perceptions, norms and traditions.

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the resources to pursue awareness-raising activities in real time. Some find it challenging to assimilate the knowledge and information on contraceptive methods, and others mention the difficulty of accurately translating the content of the SWEDD themes into local languages.



LESSON 7: Develop monitoring and evaluation indicators to monitor, evaluate and document the activities of religious and traditional leaders.

Rigorous research is needed into these activities by the guarantors of faith and culture, which aim to change behaviour. This will ensure a solid prior understanding of the mechanisms of faith and/or culture as agents of behavioural change. It is essential for identifying alternatives or elements that can be monitored and evaluated by the SWEDD project (Kramer, 2010; World Faiths Development Dialogue, 2017). For example, the following information, if it could be collected, would be a good start:

- Details of SBCC activities promoted by religious and traditional leaders.
- Communication channels used, such as: 1) sermon during Friday lunchtime prayers or during Sunday mass; 2) individual counselling; 3) discussions with small groups; 4) interventions in the media; 5) participation in campaigns organised by the PMUs.
- Do the people reached by religious leaders represent the target demographic, e.g. men married to women of childbearing age; adolescents?
- Is the “*holistic*” gender approach taken into account? For example: Counselling sessions for couples; sessions with men and women in separate groups before bringing them together to share learning and reflections; village group sessions involving men and women; and interventions with men and women.



LESSON 8: Strengthen the engagement of religious and traditional leaders in project activities.

More work is needed in this area. It should start with the restructuring of the offices of associations of traditional chiefs and inter-religious platforms. The PMUs must be mandated to ensure that the action plans and monitoring and performance indicators of these actors are clearly defined

and integrated into the activities of the country project, with long-term technical and financial support for these action plans. PMUs can also provide support for the formation of networks and coalitions. Better still, they can establish forums for strategic collaboration to facilitate the planning and implementation of joint activities and best practice sharing between countries.



LESSON 9: Establish a long-term partnership between religious and traditional leaders and the PMUs.

This long-term partnership could develop common ground and greater trust in order to implement appropriate actions at local level. This type of partnership could have enormous potential to facilitate better understanding, documentation and dissemination of the socio-cultural and religious underpinnings of local beliefs in favour of SRH. This partnership could also help local religious leaders and faith-based organisations to develop and distribute theology-based sermon guides and documents. For example, advocacy material based on advocacy theology and religious guides on family planning, showing how religious institutions support family planning, while recognising major differences and focusing on the health, development and well-being of communities.

SUMMARY OF KEY LESSONS

Phase 1: Mapping and/ or recruitment	1	Conduct a rigorous mapping of these guarantors of tradition and culture, i.e. religious and traditional chiefs, to learn how their networks are organised and how they operate.
Phase 2: Guidance and training for leaders	2	Provide training and/or capacity-building for traditional and religious leaders both at home and abroad.
	3	Encourage experience sharing between religious and traditional leaders across countries.
	4	Address the challenges faced by some religious and traditional leaders, which prevent greater involvement in SWEDD activities.
Phase 3: The development and adoption of advocacy and communication documents	5	Establish and promote, at regional and country level, a database of guidance documents and communication and policy materials.
	6	Promote the involvement of religious and traditional leaders in the project's SBCC activities.
Phase 4: Monitoring, evaluation and learning	7	Develop monitoring and evaluation indicators to monitor, evaluate and document the activities of religious and traditional leaders.
	8	Strengthen the engagement of religious and traditional leaders in project activities.
	9	Establish a long-term partnership between religious and traditional leaders and the PMUs.

ANNEX 1: Methodology and sampling

I. Data sources

1 The information was gathered through key informant interviews in three SWEDD countries (Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, and Chad), and with three types of key informants: those responsible for this activity within the PMU; NGO staff responsible for this activity; and religious and community leaders implementing this activity. Of all the SWEDD countries, these three opted to document the process of implementing this theme.

2 We conducted a review of existing relevant documentation, focusing on project reports, meeting minutes, terms of reference and any other documents detailing the implementation of the project and relating to the engagement of religious and traditional leaders in the SWEDD project activities in the country. This document review phase was complemented by the identification and mapping of existing religious and traditional leaders in the country.

II. Sampling

The total sample of informants at country level includes: 5 representatives of PMUs, 2 representatives of technical support ministries, 2 representatives of implementing NGOs, 10 traditional leaders and 7 religious leaders. These informants do not represent a systematic sample, but, rather, a convenience sample of those with experience in the theme of this Guide across these three countries.

III. Methodology for data collection

The PMU coordinators provided a list of potential respondents. The informants were contacted directly by research facilitators to organise conversations. The conversations took place face-to-face (or virtually if face-to-face was not at all possible) and were recorded by the facilitators using personal recording devices.

The facilitators used a conversation guide - developed by the technical partner - to guide the conversations with the informants. A Training Guide was created for the training of facilitators who were trained in the use of the conversation guide before their first conversation.

IV. Analysis methodology

Data analysis involved triangulating the results, including qualitative and analysis of documents. All the information from the interview notes and meeting summaries was analysed using qualitative thematic analysis to extract, identify and structure the main topics. The relevant information was coded and organised according to predetermined themes linked to the objectives of the study. We also summarised the content of documents relating to partnerships between PMUs and religious and traditional leaders, and analysed the scores obtained during our qualitative data collection. The notes are supplemented by statements made by the participants in these interviews. The overall summary was used as the basis for creating an outline for the Best Practice Guide. Notes from the conversation guides were used to supplement each section of the Guide, where necessary.

ANNEX 2: Key informants interviewed

Key informants	Country
2 PMU representatives; 2 NGO representatives; 2 traditional leaders; 2 religious leaders	Ivory Coast
2 PMU representatives; 1 representative of the Ministry of the Interior, 1 representative of the Ministry of Health and Population, 5 traditional leaders; 2 religious leaders	Niger
1 PMU representative; 3 traditional leaders, including 1 women's representative to the Sultan of Mani (Hadjer-Lamis); 3 religious leaders	Chad

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This Guide is one of a series that retrospectively documents the process of implementing the interventions of the SWEDD project, and documents good practices, challenges and lessons learned. The “Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend” (SWEDD) project was launched in November 2015 with financial support from the World Bank, and technical support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the West African Health Organisation (WAHO). SWEDD aims to accelerate the demographic transition, trigger the demographic dividend and reduce gender inequalities in the Sahel. The motivation for this series is the fact that SWEDD has become a strategic framework for political decision-makers, opinion leaders (traditional and religious chiefs, and other community leaders), and the community to work together on issues considered sensitive in the region. This is why it was considered important to share the processes through which the project was developed. This includes descriptions of experiences, lessons learned and recommendations. This evidence could be used to enrich interventions in SWEDD+ and other initiatives on gender equality and the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women.

For more information on the documentation of the processes involved in this intervention and on the SWEDD project, visit the SWEDD project's virtual resource platform:

www.sweddknowledge.org