

AUTONOMISATION
DES FEMMES ET
DIVIDENDE
DEMOGRAPHIQUE
AU SAHEL

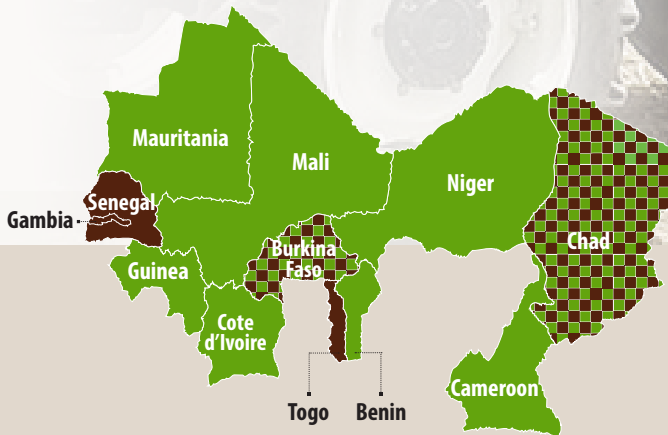
SAHEL WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT
AND
DEMOGRAPHIC
DIVIDEND



SWEDD SERIES: BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

INCREASING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

The research informing this Guide was led by Plan International WACA and focused on the SWEDD project. The information will guide the implementation of SWEDD+



© UNFPA/Anne Senges, World Bank

The project covers countries in West and Central Africa

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

The aim of this Guide is to highlight good practices, lessons learned and challenges encountered in implementing the project component focused on increasing economic opportunities for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). The related activities in the various countries covered by the SWEDD project provided the participants with opportunities for capacity building in technical, professional and entrepreneurial competencies and life skills. They also benefited from credits and subsidies for productive assets (material support and financial grants), helping to create decent jobs. In particular, the training courses offered included sectors traditionally occupied by men, enabling AGYW to be successfully integrated into these professions. Advocacy and awareness-raising activities were also implemented to create a favourable environment for the economic empowerment of AGYW in the beneficiary communities.





© UNFPA/Ollivier Girard

Sample: 17 key informants in 3 SWEDD countries: Chad, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire

Main data sources: Documentary resources and interviews with resource persons

Data collection methodology: Qualitative, with a reading outline and a conversation guide

Analysis methodology: Content analysis based on an extraction guide

Dates: January to June 2023

See the annexes at the end of the document for more details on the methodology and respondents

These activities were rolled out through collaboration between public and private institutions, civil society and the target communities. The process involved several stages. Below we look at the phases of:



What does global evidence tell us about interventions that are effective in increasing women's economic empowerment?

Adopt an inclusive, multi-sectoral approach to programming interventions

- Based on case studies from across sub-Saharan Africa, one report (Moore, 2015) suggests that combining training in market-relevant skills with access to employment and business opportunities, and appropriate financial services, can boost economic opportunities for young people. The document stresses the importance of recognising the role of mixed livelihoods in situations where formal employment is lacking, and of supporting young people's engagement in agriculture and agribusiness as viable livelihoods. Furthermore, the evidence emphasises that the challenges can only be adequately addressed through the meaningful engagement of a range of stakeholders, including the private sector, government, civil society and, in particular, young people themselves (Humphreys and Cook, 2018).

- A joint study by Aflatoun International, Plan International and Credit Suisse (Singh & Schneiders, 2016) demonstrates that combining different types of interventions offers more sustainable results. It states that while financial education and vocational training programmes aimed at helping adolescent girls find paid employment can be powerful transformative agents for empowerment, supplementing financial education with other intervention components [such as life skills and health education] in order to achieve girls' economic empowerment appears to be recognized as the right approach for interventions aimed at empowering adolescent girls in developing countries (p. 20).
- In the same vein, an analysis of the evidence in an evidence review of interventions promoting adolescent girls' economic capabilities (Stavropoulou, 2018) concluded that *"interventions integrating a range of activities are more effective than standalone interventions as they operate at various levels and are able to address the various and complex constraints adolescent girls and young women face in their daily lives. ... Integrated interventions appear more promising and able to achieve a broader set of interlinked and mutually strengthening outcomes to empower participants instead of just increasing girls' employment, earnings or savings, which are the outcomes commonly measured in evaluations of skills training programmes. ... Overall, evidence suggests that it is appropriate to combine economic activities with other components, especially life skills training and SRH education, as there are positive synergies between economic and noneconomic outcomes such as improved self-esteem, increased mobility and decision-making, lower fertility, and protection against violence, which can maximise programme effectiveness."* (p. 50)

Encourage the integration of adolescent girls and young women into professions traditionally reserved for men.

- A 2013 meta-analysis of 26 studies focusing on low- and middle-income countries, mainly in Latin America and the Caribbean, demonstrated that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) had a "positive and statistically significant effect" on young people in terms of paid employment, formal employment and income. However, a technical training programme in Malawi, which placed young men and women in apprenticeships with master artisans and observed an unexpectedly high drop-out rate among young women, demonstrated that TVET interventions need to be designed with the specific challenges of young women in mind (e.g. in relation to gendered social norms), both in urban TVET institutes and in rural apprenticeship contexts (Plan International, 2018).
- A study by the World Bank (Gender Innovation Lab) in the Republic of Congo tested the link between the choice of vocational training in a trade and the availability of information about the income that can be derived from it. The results demonstrate that a relatively low-cost intervention (showing a video containing information on occupation-specific earnings) has the potential to attract women to male-dominated occupations: in the experiment, 28.6 per cent more women chose a male-dominated job in the group that watched the video. In order to disaggregate TVET programmes and ensure that more women enrol for training in well-paid occupations, programme implementers should display information on occupation-specific earnings prior to enrolment (Gassier, Rouanet, & Traore, 2022).

PHASE 1 DESIGN ACTIVITIES

This phase of the process focused on two areas: (1) a situational analysis; and (2) building strategic partnerships.

Situational analysis

A situational analysis was conducted using existing documentation, by an ad hoc committee. This work was reinforced by empirical studies and technical workshops. It provided an overview of the living conditions of adolescent girls and young women, and opportunities for employment and income-generating activities. This work led to the setting of the project's general guidelines, the drafting of the sub-project on increased economic opportunities, identification of the various obstacles to the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women, and the selection of promising areas and sectors to which the project's beneficiaries could be directed.

In addition to the analyses of living conditions, a study of the labour market was conducted in Mali and Chad using existing documentation. In Côte d'Ivoire, the private sector was included as one of the key components of the process. A field study was conducted to gather up-to-date information from entrepreneurs, financial organisations and local groups on growth sectors, opportunities, real difficulties and recommendations in each of the regions covered by the project.

The situational analysis was used to assess demand and supply in the labour market, and the social and societal situation that characterises the living conditions of adolescent girls and young women in the three countries. Information in line with the realities on the ground, especially in terms of actual supply and demand, supported the development of the sub-project.



Building strategic partnerships

Government agencies in each country have demonstrated effective leadership in building the partnerships that are essential to the project's success. A technical committee of gender experts and resource persons from the various sectoral ministries involved led the activities in each country, in collaboration with technical partners and civil society representatives. In the specific cases of Mali and Chad, representatives of the umbrella organisations of women's associations and representatives of

traditional and religious leaders were involved in the design of the sub-project. This was achieved in particular through their participation in a number of consultation, awareness-raising and advocacy workshops.



It is important to avoid going it alone and to involve all stakeholders interested in the issue. To this end, the mobilisation of a number of actors in the sectoral ministries around the programme priorities and subsequent activities proved a lifesaver.

Report on SWEDD in Chad



Key lessons learned from the design of the activities



Lesson 1: Adopt an inclusive approach during the design phase, by prioritising collaboration between state organisations and civil society.

The active participation of local groups and associations, traditional leaders, religious and administrative chiefs, members of the target communities and project beneficiaries seems to increase the chances of success of the interventions and the interest of the communities¹.



Lesson 2: Involve the private sector in labour market analysis.

Involving private sector agents (potential employers, service providers, etc.) in this phase makes it possible to take account of their expectations, better assess market demand and encourage the creation of an environment conducive to decent employment.

PHASE

2

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

There were two parts to this phase: (1) pre-training and training for access to decent work; and (2) support in finding a job or practising a trade. It was conducted at institutional level by the ministries of social affairs and gender development, with the support of other ministries (planning, health, youth, employment, education), the SWEDD Project Management Units (PMUs), administrative and territorial authorities, and the National Rural Development Support Agencies (in Côte d'Ivoire and Chad). At operational level, NGOs² were recruited based on specific criteria, including legal existence, proof of presence in the field, community roots, technical expertise, etc. The various intervention zones were entrusted to the NGOs selected in accordance with the above principles. In Côte d'Ivoire, however, they took on relatively more responsibility³ Focal points from the ministries involved, heads of decentralised government bodies and local authorities played an active part in the smooth running of the activities, which were implemented by the various NGOs selected.

¹ The various final reports highlight the importance of the involvement of these different actors in the success of the projects. In particular, the support of community leaders in gaining the support of target communities is highlighted in Côte d'Ivoire (IRC and AIBEF reports) and Chad (SWEDD PMU Chad report).

² Two NGOs in Côte d'Ivoire, 7 in Mali and 4 in Chad implemented the project.

³ The NGOs in Côte d'Ivoire developed the projects on the basis of national guidelines submitted by the ministries.

Pre-training and training for access to decent work

As a prelude to the training of beneficiaries, **the pre-training phase** included the various activities listed below:

✦ **Identification and registration of trainees:** this stage was managed using strategies specific to each country, following an awareness-raising mission targeting potential beneficiaries, their parents and members of their communities, about the opportunities associated with the sectors identified in each zone. In Chad, ad hoc committees under the responsibility of NGOs identified candidates within existing groups. In Mali, a “public lottery” was organised to select the participants in the economic activities. In Côte d'Ivoire, the beneficiaries were selected within the Safe Spaces on the basis of a survey to identify the most vulnerable girls among those who had a good attendance record in the activities carried out in the safe spaces. They had benefited from life-skills training, including awareness raising on the importance of empowering women, public speaking and communication skills, all of which help to increase their self-confidence and leadership abilities, and to motivate them to pursue income-generating activities (IGAs)⁴.

✦ **Identification and preparation of training centres:** to provide vocational training for women, training centres and trainers were identified and prepared. In particular, this involves deploying systems to strengthen the operational capacities of these centres, putting in place agreements between the parties involved and training the participants' trainers. The latter were therefore equipped to support beneficiaries in acquiring the various targeted skills.



© UNFPA/Ollivier Girard

✦ **Mobilising and raising awareness among young people and the community:** this phase helped to win the support of communities for the ideals of the project. Advocacy with traditional leaders helped to secure their approval and support.⁵ This is a key factor in the smooth running of project activities, given the power of these leaders to influence the attitudes and daily practices of members of the target communities. Communication initiatives were conducted and supervised by the implementing NGOs with the support of decentralised government bodies. Religious, traditional and community leaders, and women's associations, were both the targets and vehicles of the strategy developed to ensure ownership of the sub-project's aims. The mentors from Safe Spaces in Côte d'Ivoire, who had been trained, also took part in these activities. Multiple channels were used: radio, posters in the technical departments, plays and various training sessions.

The training activities themselves were carried out at several levels. The participants benefited from literacy courses, training in setting up and running a business and, depending on the sector chosen, specific capacity-building.

✦ **Literacy in local languages:** beneficiaries of the programme were trained for three months to read and calculate in local languages. This training was provided in Mali by literacy trainers on the basis of one trainer for every fifteen (15) AGYW⁶ as a prerequisite for participation in economic training courses. In Chad, French- and Arabic-speaking literacy trainers received capacity building to provide courses for AGYW (1 trainer for every ten female learners)⁷. In Côte d'Ivoire, trainers identified by the

⁴ Côte d'Ivoire: IRC final project report, p. 37.

⁵ In Chad, for example, awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns aimed at traditional authorities and communities enabled women from groups in the Salamat and Hadjer Lamis regions to acquire 70 hectares of land.

⁶ Summary report on progress and results recorded in the implementation of the sub-project for support for learning and economic empowerment of girls and women associated with RMNCNH, SWEDD PMU Mali, March 2022, p. 10.

⁷ SWEDD, SWEDD PMU implementation summary report, Chad, August 2019, p. 27.

Literacy Department received capacity building to provide literacy classes for AGYW in secondary schools (1 trainer for every 30 female learners)⁸. These initiatives made it possible to give these learners the right to access knowledge. They were better able to grasp the theoretical concepts that they acquired during their subsequent vocational training. As a respondent from the Mali PMU noted: *“Training in the local language and the opportunity for girls to make their own choices are aspects that need to be perpetuated. The same applies to the holistic nature of the care provided: not only have they been taught to read and write, but they have also received a training certificate and equipment.”*

Learn to Earn kits in Cote d’Ivoire:

“Learn to Earn” is an entrepreneurial training module whose content was adapted to the Ivorian context as part of the SWEDD project. The training was delivered in Safe Spaces in two workshops over 13 hours spread over three days, and was based on practical exercises at each session. The participants learnt how to identify a business idea, study its feasibility and carry out market research. They also learned about sales techniques and strategies, as well as simplified accounting and the day-to-day running of a microenterprise. Issues including financing the activity and socio-emotional skills were also addressed. Technical working sessions were held to update the trainers’ knowledge of entrepreneurial concepts, the business plan outline and how to complete it. These kits were then sent to the beneficiaries, along with the reporting and monitoring forms for the entrepreneurial training.

- **Techniques for setting up and managing microenterprise:** Participants were trained in business, accounting and financial management. Their entrepreneurial skills have been enhanced and they have learned how to draw up business plans. Côte d'Ivoire's *Learn to Earn* kits are a good example of this.
- **Technical and vocational training:** In Mali and Chad, beneficiaries were able to take training courses enabling them to start or pursue a vocational activity. Several vocational training centres have been contracted for this purpose. Importantly, the training curriculums included jobs not traditionally offered to women. Adolescent girls and young women have therefore gained access to fields such as construction, air conditioning, mechanics, renewable energies and IT. Other more “traditional” vocations (sewing, hairdressing, catering, horticulture, etc.) were also available and chosen by some trainees.

- **Capacity-building in agriculture, poultry farming, fish farming and agrofood processing:** Women who chose one of these areas were equipped with simple techniques and were able to acquire or reinforce their technical knowledge. It should be noted that these areas were largely covered in Chad, compared with Mali where only five participants opted for agrofood processing. The choice of areas and sectors were based on consultations with beneficiaries and local economic practices.
- **Income-generating activities (IGAs):** Beneficiaries were made aware of and trained in IGAs, with an introduction to small businesses, food processing, savings and micro-credit.

⁸ AIBEF project closure report, p. 15 and IRC project final report, pp. 21&22.

Support in finding and keeping a job or practising a trade

An examination of the interventions deployed in the three countries reveals different approaches, among which three modelled strategies (Agri-ProFocus; IIRR, 2013) can be highlighted.

i. Reducing resistance by building on tradition: Professionalising women's traditional tasks increases their visibility, creates new business opportunities and improves women's position in these new opportunities. This is particularly evident in training initiatives in the traditional trades and in the agro-pastoral sector.

ii. Creating space for women: This involves positioning women in male value chains (particularly in occupations traditionally reserved for men) and stimulating female entrepreneurship (with the creation of microenterprises or IGAs).

Types and duration of training courses

In Mali

- ✦ Training lasting 7 to 90 days depending on the trade, including poultry farming, hairdressing, dressmaking, cattle fattening, sheep fattening, fish smoking, horticulture, mill management, catering, soap making, dyeing and agro-food processing.
- ✦ Six months' training in trades traditionally reserved for men: sanitary plumbing, electricity for buildings, solar energy, media, refrigeration/air conditioning, painting buildings, metal joinery, screen printing/calligraphy, woodwork, motorbike mechanics, bakery/pastry-making, sewing and embroidery, and the hotel trade.
- ✦ Seven days' training in business and group management for all participants, in all the areas mentioned above.

In Chad (all participants came from pre-existing women's groups)

- ✦ Practical training in simple farming, animal husbandry, arboriculture and fish farming techniques.
- ✦ Techniques for processing, preserving and marketing local produce.
- ✦ Use and maintenance of tractors and power tillers.
- ✦ Installation and maintenance of solar panels and satellite dishes.

iii. Organising change: Thanks to the acquisition of technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial competencies and life skills, participants enhanced their capacity to act and are in a position to become competitive in the labour market.

The beneficiaries were able to obtain support in setting up and holding down a job or an income-generating activity. This resulted in:

- ▶ in Côte d'Ivoire, the distribution of Learn to Earn teaching kits and support funds for the creation and development of IGAs;
- ▶ in Chad, the provision of equipment, the installation of two workshops for the development of renewable energy, the provision of working capital, the distribution of IGA kits and the donation of modern production equipment and tools, all for the creation, management and improvement of IGA activities;
- ▶ in Mali, funding participants to create and develop IGAs and microenterprises, providing installation kits of work equipment and working capital, and placing and monitoring young girls in companies for a training course with a view to finding a first job.



© UNFPA/Ollivier Girard

The results are quite encouraging and are documented in the project's monitoring and evaluation materials. The economic power of women participants has increased substantially and their social position has improved. For an illustration, see the case study on Chad below. A woman in Mali, trained in photo-videography, was awarded the Nyéléni prize in 2017 for women who stand out in journalism. As a respondent from the Mali PMU informed us: "...around 2 billion CFA francs (USD 3.3 million) in revenue and over 7,000 jobs have been created directly by these women... Each girl who has benefited from the programme has, in addition to herself, created at least one or two jobs, and in some places as many as 3 or 5..."

In addition to the material/financial support provided to beneficiaries, a financial inclusion component was also included, to support the women in accessing financial services. Generally speaking, in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, the various groups formed during the training process have maintained their links, and some of them have become work and/or support groups. In Chad, the savings group (SG)/village savings and loan association (VSLA) approach was successfully implemented. VSLAs have demonstrated their effectiveness in achieving greater financial inclusion by enabling their members to generate savings and access revolving credit.

Key implementation lessons learned



Lesson 3: Encourage the demystification of occupations traditionally dominated by men by training and empowering adolescent girls and young women in these areas.

By encouraging beneficiaries to take up these trades through appropriate information, future programmes or similar initiatives will enable girls and women to broaden their horizons by offering them more substantial income opportunities, helping to increase their economic power, and their social and legal status.



Lesson 4: Include in the list of professions those traditionally reserved for women.

This strategy makes it possible to anticipate community resistance by relying on tradition through the promotion of women's traditional trades in the career guidance process.



Lesson 5: Encourage adolescent girls and young women by strengthening their technical, professional and entrepreneurial competence and their life skills.

This reinforcement increases their economic opportunities and their transition to decent work⁹.



Lesson 6: Adopt a holistic and integrated approach to the implementation of projects aimed at empowering women.

Training and support aimed at empowering women and their communities would benefit from being provided as a package. This tends to produce more convincing results¹⁰. The holistic approach enables women to be equipped more effectively in all aspects of their lives and engages the community in working towards the success of the initiatives.

⁹ A study by UNFPA (2010) confirms this, highlighting the importance of building the capacities of young women to enable them to participate fully in economic and social life. Another UNIDO study (2019) reinforces this finding.

¹⁰ A joint study by Aflatoun International and Plan International (March 2017) concludes that girls' empowerment programmes are more effective when they combine non-economic skills and financial education modules.



Lesson 7: Monitor participants to support continued employment.

This monitoring is combined with the allocation of production assets and financial resources, and mentorship. This combination enables women and girls to effectively carry out the activities for which they have been trained, and contributes to their self-fulfilment and the socio-economic development of their locality.



© UNFPA/Anne Senges, World Bank

Case study: Non-traditional occupations for adolescent girls and young women in Chad

As part of an innovative experiment, 112 adolescent girls and young women were trained in the use and maintenance of tractors and power tillers. They are now capable of driving these machines to sow large areas, carrying out regular maintenance and repairing them if they break down. Their experience is indicative of the dynamic positive change brought about by this opportunity. In addition, 161 adolescent girls and young women received training in the installation and maintenance of solar panels and satellite dishes. They bring significant added value to their regions, where this type of skill is in high demand. One successful example is a 32-year-old mother of 8 who was able to start up a successful business in this field. A [testimonial video](#) is available on YouTube.

Sources: interviews with the PMU during the interviews for this Guide; see also. <https://www.banquemoniale.org/fr/news/feature/2019/05/14/female-tractor-drivers-and-electricians-in-chad-disrupt-the-status-quo>

PHASE 3

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

The monitoring and evaluation strategy varies from one SWEDD country to another. However, there are a number of recurring themes, which are summarised below. It is based on the definition of a framework of results and indicators and tools for collecting basic and periodic data. Monitoring and evaluation staff recruited at both UNFPA's Regional Technical Secretariat (RTS) and at country level are put into action to coordinate these activities. Primary data is collected in the field and then processed to feed central databases dedicated to specific aspects of the project: attendance monitoring, awareness-raising, talks, literacy and IGAs. It should be noted, however, that the monitoring mechanism did not sufficiently target key indicators relating to increasing economic opportunities. This limits ability to adequately evaluate the effects of different interventions. Monitoring the project also raised the following challenges:

Gender stereotypes: Encouraging women to enter trades that, in the collective imagination of their communities, are considered to be for men has created challenges for the women already working in these trades. In Mali, a number of trainees (particularly in the plumbing and building trades) were refused access to service contracts, mainly because they are women. What emerges¹¹ is a need for ongoing deconstruction of gender stereotypes. This requires advocacy actions targeting the whole community with a view to new positive standards for decent work for adolescent girls and young women. There were also cases in Mali and Chad where husbands or guardians sought to control the assets of some of the participants. According to our key informants, advocacy efforts were made to overcome these challenges.

Start-up delays and challenges linked to subsidies: In Côte d'Ivoire, the mobilisation of beneficiaries in the initial stages of the project was challenging due to the lack of availability of those who had been identified beforehand, mainly because of the time elapsed between the identification of prospective trainees and the actual start of the project¹². As a result of these delays, some of the women were in different locations for various reasons (marriage, trips, seasonal travel, rural out-migration in search of employment, etc.), while others could not be found because of errors in the contact details available.

The accumulated delays in the start-up of certain sequences of the sub-project led to several disruptions. There were logistical challenges which explain¹³ why some of the planned activities were not carried out. In addition, some applicants' withdrawals were documented by the committees that approved business plans. The strategy adopted was to propose an alternative to the committee for approval of the business plans and then to pay the grant to the beneficiaries in one instalment rather than two as planned.

Cost and frequency of monitoring: In Mali, beneficiary monitoring activities were a challenge due to underestimation of the cost of the service and the duration of implementation monitoring. It was felt that the duration of beneficiary monitoring (12 months) and the ratio of monitoring agents to beneficiaries were insufficient.

Accessibility and duration of courses: In Mali, a number of adolescent girls and young women selected in advance were unable to take part in the training courses because the training centres were far from where they lived. It was also pointed out that the training duration¹⁴ was insufficient to enable beneficiaries to master the essential concepts in certain trades.

¹¹This information comes from interviews with one of the respondents from the Mali PMU and from the end-of-activity reports.

¹²IRC final project report, pp. 15&32.

¹³Specifically, AIBEF was unable to subsidise the business plans of beneficiaries trained in Hambol and the IRC only subsidised 74% of beneficiaries whose business plans were approved. The participants were not monitored.

¹⁴Capitalisation sheets for IGAs and occupations traditionally reserved for men, SWEDD PMU Mali.

Time available for women and girls: There were some disruptions to activities in the three countries surveyed, particularly in terms of attendance at certain sessions. The participants' domestic, social and economic obligations (housework, childcare, farm work, etc.) sometimes prevented them from taking part in the sessions.

External challenges (climate, security, COVID-19): For several years now, the Sahel region has been affected by climate change crises, and security crises of all kinds, particularly those linked to terrorism. The effects of climate change are having a particular impact on agricultural activities, which are an important part of activities with high income-generating potential. Lack of security is affecting the normal course of all economic activities, with participants unable to go about their business in peace at all times, or having their work tools snatched away by kidnappers. These day-to-day challenges were compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Emergency measures taken by governments at the time of the pandemic outbreak led to the suspension of all project activities. Nevertheless, there were efforts to adapt (continuation of some online literacy sessions in areas where connectivity was available, and an emergency mission to Côte d'Ivoire to monitor grant recipients).

Key lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation



Lesson 8: Widen the scope of the situational analysis as far as possible by carrying out an in-depth social analysis to complement the economic analysis.

This approach makes it easier to identify the real problems in relation to the challenges of economic empowerment for adolescent girls and young women.



Lesson 9: Include activities in economic empowerment projects that identify and break down stereotypes based on traditional gender norms.

This makes it possible to work upstream to improve the environment for decent work.



Lesson 10: Ensure proper planning and budgeting of activities and compliance with the technical and financial partner's procedures and deadlines.

Subsidising beneficiaries' business plans is crucial to the success of initiatives targeting economic self-sufficiency. This keeps them motivated and prevents them from falling back into certain patterns of behaviour due to their precarious situation. In addition, monitoring of beneficiaries and their activities, if appropriately financed, will increase the chances of project success.



Lesson 11: Strive to develop a programme that maintains women's life balance, to the extent possible.

When planning and implementing projects, it is important to take account of the triple burden (productive, reproductive and care-giving) of women so as not to expose them to agenda conflicts.



Lesson 12: Develop and implement an economic risk mitigation strategy.

It is essential to take account of the security context when implementing projects. Various security challenges (robberies, terrorism, armed conflicts) can jeopardise the ideal course of activities designed to empower girls and women. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic led to restrictive measures whose negative effects, particularly economic, continue to be felt throughout the world. It would be useful to adapt the various initiatives in the light of these experiences.



Lesson 13: Promote innovative initiatives that include adaptation to climate change.

The vagaries of the weather, the continuing degradation of natural resources such as decreasing rainfall and the cyclical changes of drought and floods are a challenge facing rural communities. The destruction of all or part of fields and crops has a negative impact on agricultural and agri-food IGAs, which can hinder the empowerment of girls and women in these communities.

SUMMARY OF KEY LESSONS

Phase 1: Design	1	Adopt an inclusive approach during the design phase, by prioritising collaboration between state organisations and civil society.
	2	Involve the private sector in labour market analysis.
Phase 2: Implementation	3	Encourage the demystification of occupations traditionally dominated by men by training and empowering adolescent girls and young women in these areas.
	4	Include in the list of professions those traditionally reserved for women.
	5	Encourage adolescent girls and young women by strengthening their technical, professional and entrepreneurial competence and their life skills.
	6	Adopt a holistic and integrated approach to the implementation of projects aimed at empowering women.
	7	Monitor participants to support continued employment.
Phase 3: Monitoring, evaluation and learning	8	Widen the scope of the situational analysis as far as possible by carrying out an in-depth social analysis to complement the economic analysis.
	9	Include in economic empowerment projects activities that identify and break down stereotypes based on traditional gender norms.
	10	Ensure proper planning and budgeting of activities and compliance with the technical and financial partner's procedures and deadlines.
	11	Strive to develop a programme that maintains women's life balance, to the extent possible.
	12	Develop and implement an economic risk mitigation strategy.
	13	Promote innovative initiatives that include adaptation to climate change.

Annex 1: Methodological approach and sampling

I. Data sources

1 The information was gathered through key informant interviews in three SWEDD countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Chad). They are drawn from the three main categories of stakeholders: sectoral ministries, Project Management Units (PMUs) and civil society organisations, in particular implementing NGOs. These three countries are the SWEDD countries that have chosen to document the implementation of this theme.

2 The SWEDD project reports and other documents relating to increased economic opportunities from the three countries and elsewhere were also used.

II. Sampling

The samples of country informants include various experts from each country, detailed in Annex 2 below. 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. Data collection methodology

The facilitators recruited were trained and put in contact with the PMU focal points during a formal virtual session. A list of documents was made available by the PMUs of the three countries. Reading and interview sheets were drawn up on the basis of a framework for using the documents identified and a conversation guide respectively. The need to write notes directly on the guide was emphasised, even if this meant transferring them to the electronic format. It was also decided to begin the interviews by prioritising the resource persons from the three categories listed above. The use of the snowball technique was also prescribed where necessary. Face-to-face, telephone and virtual interviews using Microsoft Teams and Zoom were used for exchanges between the facilitators, the coordination team, the PMU contact points and the key informants who were actually contacted.

The documentary resources were compared with theoretical considerations relating to decent employment, gender norm transformation and the empowerment of girls and young women.

IV. Analysis methodology

The documentary and empirical data collected and recorded in a database were processed to produce a country report. The use of benchmarks provided guidelines for a critical account of the sequences that marked the implementation of the projects for the economic empowerment of women and girls, which are the subject of this retrospective process documentation.

The information required to write the Guide was first extracted from the reports for each country and arranged along the lines suggested by the template provided. Each part was then written up, with a focus on the lessons that could be extracted. Finally, additional research was conducted to determine whether or not the key findings could be linked to pre-existing theoretical positions.

ANNEX 2: Key informants interviewed

Informants interviewed	Country
4 individuals: 1 government expert, 2 NGO experts and 1 PMU expert	Cote d'Ivoire
7 individuals: 3 PMU experts, 2 experts from a government ministry and 2 NGO experts	Mali
6 individuals: 2 experts from a government ministry, 1 PMU expert and 3 NGO experts	Chad

Bibliography

Aflatoun International. March 2017. A Global Desk Review of Financial Education's Contribution to Girls' Economic Empowerment. <https://www.aflatoun.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Financial-Educations-Contribution-to-Girls-Economic-Empowerment-DeskReview-CreditSuisse-1.pdf>.

Agri-ProFocus; IIRR. (2013). Changing channels: Gender equality in the development of agricultural value chains. Amsterdam: Editions KIT.

Gassier, M., Rouanet, L., & Traore, L. (2022, February). Addressing Gender-Based Segregation through Information: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment in the Republic of Congo. Retrieved from <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/611661644422085910/pdf/Addressing-Gender-Based-Segregation-through-Information-Evidence-from-a-Randomized-Experiment-in-the-Republic-of-Congo.pdf>.

Moore, K. (2015). Fostering economic opportunities for young people in Africa: A comprehensive approach.

Plan International. (2018, September). Plan International position paper on economic empowerment in the world of work with a focus on young people, particularly girls and young women. Retrieved from https://plan-international.org/uploads/2021/12/glo_economic_empowerment_in_the_world_of_work_policy_paper_eng_sept18.pdf.

Humphreys, Rowena and Paul Cook. May 2018. young people Employment and Entrepreneurship: An Annotated Bibliography. Plan-International. https://plan-international.org/uploads/2022/01/glo-young_people_employment_entrepreneurship_annotated_bibliography-final-io-eng-may18.pdf.

United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). 2019. Integrating the gender dimension into cluster development. Vienna, Austria: UNIDO. https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/2019-08/Mainstreaming_Gender_in_Cluster_Development_Fr.pdf.

Singh, J., & Schneiders, M. (2016). A Global Desk Review of Financial Education's Contribution to Girls' Economic Empowerment. Aflatoun International, Plan International & Crédit Suisse. Retrieved from <https://www.aflatoun.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Financial-Educations-Contribution-to-Girls-Economic-Empowerment-DeskReview-CreditSuisse-1.pdf>.

Stavropoulou, Maria. (2018) Interventions promoting adolescent girls' economic capabilities: what works? A rapid evidence review. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence. <https://www.gage.odi.org/publication/adolescent-girls-economic-interventions-evidence-review/>

UNFPA. 2010. The reasons for investing in young people as part of the national poverty reduction strategy. Study commissioned by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), New York. Second Edition. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Case%20for%20Investing-FINAL_FR_v1.pdf.

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 the 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: <https://sweddknowledge.org/>.