

**SWEDD SERIES: OPERATIONAL BRIEF**

**INCREASING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN**



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

This operational brief is part of a series that retrospectively documents the process of implementing the interventions of the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) project. It describes the good practices, challenges and lessons learned in implementing the project component focused on increasing economic opportunities. It presents a summary of a literature review and conversations with key respondents in Chad, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire between January and June 2023, as detailed in a guide of the same name. The implementation experiences described in this Brief and the guide serve to inform the development of activities improving the economic opportunities and income-generation capacity of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in SWEDD+ and for other projects on economic opportunities for AGYW in the countries of the Global South, particularly in West and Central Africa.

**According to global best practice:**

- ▶ Adopt an inclusive and multisectoral approach to programming economic interventions, including training in a range of market-relevant skills, with access to employment and business opportunities and appropriate financial services.
- ▶ Encourage the integration of young women into professions traditionally reserved for men.

Sources: Humphreys and Cook, 2018; Stavropoulou, 2018; Plan International, 2018; Gassier, Rouanet, & Traore, 2022.

**Phases in the development of economic opportunities**

**Phase 1: Design activities**

- Situational analysis of the living conditions of young people and opportunities for employment and income-generating activities.
- Building strategic partnerships: gender experts, representatives of sectoral ministries, technical partners, civil society representatives, including women and religious and traditional leaders.

**Phase 2: Implementation of activities**

- Pre-training and training: identification and registration of beneficiaries; preparation of training centres; mobilization and awareness-raising of young people and communities; literacy training as well as technical and vocational training.
- Support participants in finding and keeping a job or practising a trade in ways that help to reduce resistance (for example, by drawing on tradition) and create space for women to enter male value chains and enhance their ability to participate in and become competitive on the labour market.

**Phase 3: Monitoring, evaluation and learning**

- 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 Regional Technical Secretariat (RTS) and country levels to coordinate these activities.
- Primary data collection in the field, with data then being fed into central databases focused on specific aspects of the project: attendance monitoring, awareness-raising, talks, literacy and income-generating activities (IGAs).
- Project monitoring raised challenges: gender stereotypes for types of work accepted for girls, start-up delays and challenges related to grants, cost and frequency of monitoring, accessibility and duration of training, availability of time for participants and external challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Activities under this component include capacity-building in technical, professional, entrepreneurial and life skills, as well as loans and grants for productive assets (material support and financial endowments). The activities were rolled out through collaboration between public and private institutions, civil society and the target communities.



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 In Chad, 112 adolescent girls and young women were trained in the use and maintenance of tractors and power tillers. A further 161 were trained in the installation and maintenance of solar panels and satellite dishes, in a region where this type of skill is in high demand.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/05/14/female-tractor-drivers-and-electricians-in-chad-disrupt-the-status-quo>

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## SUMMARY OF KEY LESSONS

Phase 1: Designing the activities	1	Adopt an inclusive approach during the design phase, by prioritizing collaboration between state organizations and civil society.
	2	Involve the private sector in labour market analysis.
Phase 2: Implementing the activities	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 work-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.

Sources: Gassier, M., Rouanet, L., & Traore, L. (2022, February). Addressing Gender-Based Segregation through Information: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment in the Republic of Congo; Humphreys, Rowena and Paul Cook. May 2018. Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship: An Annotated Bibliography. Plan-International; 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; Stavropoulou, Maria. October 2018. Interventions promoting adolescent girls' economic capabilities: what works? A rapid evidence review. Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) programme.

This Brief is based on a guide that sets out the process in detail. It has been developed by PLAN International with the technical support of UNFPA and the World Bank.

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/>