



UNFPA Regional Office for West and Central Africa
2018 Annual Report

**Demographic Dividend
in West and Central Africa**
2018 Progress Report – Summary

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We have completed the first year of our new four-year regional action plan, with activities and initiatives implemented in line with the:

—————→ **Global UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2021 aiming to contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, and its roadmap on the Demographic Dividend.**

Significant progress has been made in the provision of frontline reproductive health services to those in dire need, but much more still needs to be done. As part of the Ouagadougou Partnership, in which UNFPA is a core partner, the coordinated interventions of the partnership's actors have enabled an additional 1,398,000 women to access and use modern contraceptive methods (63 per cent of target by 2020), from 2016 to 2018. Furthermore, UNFPA has contributed 70% to meeting WCARO countries' contraceptive needs in 2018, while two other partners contributed the remaining 30%.

Our various campaigns and interventions have yielded positive results with traditional, community-based and religious leaders embracing the demographic dividend (DD) ideal. Some influential local leaders, are also championing and advocating finding the courage to say “No” to child marriages, supporting family planning and abandoning female genital mutilation.





Repositioning Quality Midwife Training to achieve “3-Zeroes”

Maternal and neonatal mortality indicators in West and Central Africa are the most worrying in the world. To improve this situation, UNFPA's 2018-2021 strategic plan, which is in tandem with the AU's Continental Plan for Reproductive, Sexual, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) 2016-2030 (Maputo Plan of Action), targets three (3) transformative results:

Zero preventable maternal deaths,

Zero unmet need for family planning and

Zero gender-based violence and harmful practices.

This will require the provision of quality care which often lacks during childbirth and postpartum, accompanied by the provision of the necessary resources, with contributions from the states concerned, to improve health worker training.

—> *Three new centres of excellence for the Masters in Nursing and Obstetrics were opened in 2018 in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger at the beginning of the academic year in November. Three existing institutes in Abidjan, Bamako and Niamey were identified and up-scaled to offer the Bachelor-Masters-Doctorate system, in order to upgrade and deepen medical education and give both midwives and nurses access to Graduate-level courses over a period of four academic semesters.*

Health workers conducting antenatal visits to pregnant women in a health facility in Chad.

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Islam, Demographic Dividend and Family Well-being

Partnership between UNFPA WCARO with religious leaders and Faith Based Organisations which started in 2015 continued in 2018. Together, we carried out a number of triumphant initiatives to increase the population's understanding of the need to harness the demographic dividend and enhance family well-being.

→ *UNFPA-Nigeria organized the largest conference of Muslim religious leaders to discuss their role in demographic dividend. The two-day conference was officially opened by the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo.*

About 200 Islamic religious leaders from across the country converged in Abuja in September 2018 for a two-day forum with the theme **“Harnessing Demographic Dividend for Sustainable Development of Nigeria: The Role of Muslim Religious Leaders”**.



Muslim religious leaders of Nigeria at the conference on “Harnessing the demographic dividend for sustainable development of Nigeria: the role of Muslim religious leaders” in Abuja, officially opened by the Vice President of the Republic of Nigeria Prof. Yemi Osinbajo – Abuja, Nigeria, Aug 2018.

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UN Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, visits the National Center for Fistula Control of Niger.
© UNFPA / Ollivier Girard

Towards eradicating Obstetric Fistula in the region

The region for the first time has a strategy of eradicating obstetric fistula, which led ECOWAS Health Ministers adopt a resolution for the elimination of the fistula. Obstetric fistula remains a major concern in developing countries, where it is estimated that more than two million women and girls are victims. The eradication of obstetric fistula has been a priority for UNFPA since it launched the Global Campaign to Eliminate Fistula in 2003. However, in the West and Central Africa region there are still many challenges, including lack of comprehensive data.



→ *UNFPA-WCARO partnered with the Institute for Training and Research in Urology & Family Health (IFRU-SF) to host the 5th Urological Meeting in Dakar (URODAK18).*

The meeting brought together national and international experts to discuss treatment and repair of obstetric fistula and new cancer management techniques. Senegal's Minister of Health and Social Action Mr. Abdoulaye Diouf SARR, officially opened the Meeting of Dakar in the presence of Ms. Beatrice Mutali, then Deputy Regional Director of the UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office.

While the exact number of women with Obstetric Fistula in the region is not known, they are estimated to have reached 1,000,000 victims with 46% of them in Nigeria alone. The incidence rate is around 30,000 new cases per year. **Fistula, child marriage, early pregnancy and female genital mutilation are all interrelated.** Child marriage is growing concern in Africa and particularly in West Africa where over 40% of girls are married before their 15th birthday. Female genital mutilation in West Africa, for example, affects 44% of girls aged 15 to 19 years.

1 million

Women reached

46%

In Nigeria

Remarkable success of the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend Project

The Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) initiative remains one of the remarkable success stories of UNFPA-WCARO. This regional initiative has been accelerating the demographic transition which continues to create the conditions for a demographic dividend that promotes growth and the reduction of gender inequalities between men and women in the Sahel region.

—> *In 2018, Benin was added the seventh country in the initiative which strengthens the empowerment level of women and adolescent girls in Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. The working framework supports access to quality reproductive, child and maternal health services, and improves knowledge production and sharing.*

SWEDD Launches 'win-win' empowerment strategy

—> *The "safe spaces" and the "husband-to-be schools" are two novel SWEDD initiatives that were up-scaled this year. These two win-win empowerment strategies are a bulwark of SWEDD's continued quest of implementing UNFPA's three transformational goals.*

The "safe space" is a space that welcomes 100 girls, of which two thirds are aged between 9 and 14 years and the remaining third are aged 15 to 19. The "safe spaces" concept was launched in Niger in 2013 under the clarion call "**Initiative for Adolescent Girls - Knowledge for Dignity**".

The people of Bariobe in Equatorial Guinea engage with an awareness-raising team on birth-spacing and maternal health. © UNFPA



Noble Energy Project makes progress in Equatorial Guinea

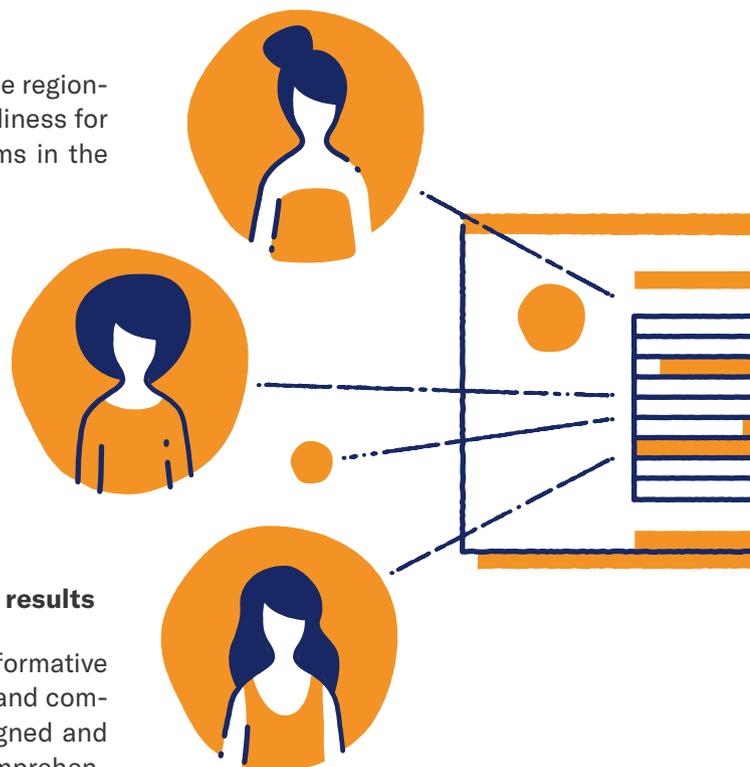
UNFPA's Noble Energy Project received a boost when its plans to supply medicines and family planning essentials were approved by Equatorial Guinea's health and social welfare minister Dr. Salomón Nguema Owono. Also accepted was provision of a mobile clinic to serve Noble Energy's project on maternal and neonatal mortality reduction in Bioko Norte and Kie Ntem localities.



“The world is changing, so is UNFPA-WCARO”

—> *Another notable success in 2018 was the Change Management Training workshop for 23 UNFPA country representatives and senior staff at the regional office.*

This certified training workshop hosted in Banjul, equipped the regional and country managers with the requisite knowledge in readiness for their role in managing ongoing changes, including UN reforms in the region.



New communications strategy to support delivery of transformative results

As part of advocacy efforts to support the delivery of the three transformative results of the 2018-2021 strategic plan, and the SDGs, media, advocacy and communication professionals at both the regional and country offices designed and adopted a communication strategy. The strategy was preceded by comprehensive communications capacity and needs assessment, which included a public opinion survey.

Findings of the assessment and survey informed the design of the strategy that which is already in being implementing to ensure that UNFPA is, and seen to be bold, vocal and visible.

Artists and Traditional Communicators Advocate for Harnessing the Demographic Dividend

As part of its strategy to take the message to the grassroots, UNFPA continues to engage with artists, religious leaders and traditional communicators. A regional conference on the theme, **“Partnership for Culture, Communication and the Demographic Dividend,”** held in Dakar, Senegal from 25 to 27 November 2018.

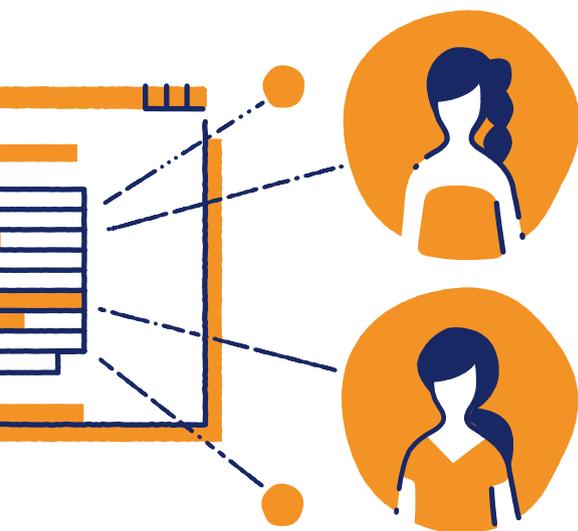
At the end of the conference, a regional network of traditional communicators in West and Central Africa was created to promote and coordinate the implementation of activities geared toward accelerating social transformation as a condition sine qua non conducive to accelerate the demographic dividend in West and Central African countries.

→ *Equally, a ninety-one (91)-year old Senegalese traditional communications legend, El Hadj Mansour Mbaye, was awarded the premier UNFPA-WCARO Special Distinction Medal.*

Mbaye who is the first traditional communicators to be honoured with this esteemed award is the founding president of the National Network of Traditional Communicators (RENACOT) of Senegal. The glowing citation acknowledges Mbaye’s lifelong commitment to the promotion of good health for mother and child and family planning, with a view of eliminating preventable maternal deaths and harmful gender practices in Senegal.

→ *Meanwhile, the Afro-diva songster Coumba Gawlo organized a communications campaign on themes relating to the demographic dividend in Nouakchott, Mauritania. This also involved several famous Mauritanian artists notably Mouna Mint Dendenni, Seydou Nourou Gueye and the young Khoudia.*

The campaign was organized with the technical and financial support of the Mauritanian Government, UNFPA, and other agencies including UNICEF, WHO, UNAIDS, OHCHR, IOM, USAID, the SWEDD project, and the private sector.



UNFPA unveils Demographic Dividend Observatories*

High population growth rates, maintained by some of the highest fertility rates in the world, will be the most pressing challenge in the near future. Two vital queries will need answers for the future:

Will economic development automatically lead to lower fertility?

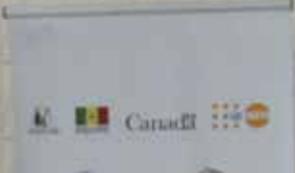
Will lower fertility automatically lead to higher economic growth?

These are among the elemental questions that inform UNFPA-WCARO's future scenario modeling and inspired its push for the establishment of National Demographic Dividend Observatories (NDDO). With the support of the Regional Centre of Excellence in Generational Economics (CREG) and the Thiès Applied Finance and Economics Research Centre (*Centre de Recherche en Economie et Finance Appliquées de Thiès - CREFAT*) as a strategic implementing partner, this objective is aligned with the AU Roadmap agreed in 2017 by the continent's Heads of States and governments. So far Benin, Senegal, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania and Chad have established fully functional National Demographic Dividend Observatories.

*An observatory serves to monitor information. It is a tool that enables continuous monitoring of a subject, social trend, sector of economic activity, territory and even technology among others to inform and guide the choices of the relevant decision-makers such as governments, parliamentarians, elected officials, development partners and civil society.

Theatre group made of students denounce the scourge of early marriages and dropping out of school in a play at the opening ceremony of the high-level conference on women's empowerment - Dakar, Senegal, Nov 2018. © UNFPA





LES CAPUCHES
JUSTICES
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THEATRE
SOUS LE LUMIERE
POUR L'INTELLIGENCE

THEATRE
SOUS LE LUMIERE
POUR L'INTELLIGENCE



Engaging Member States and other State actors

Niger's Bold High-Level Summit tackles Child Marriage and Promotes Women and Girls

- > *On the margins of the 73rd United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York, the First Lady of Niger, Dr Lalla Malika Issoufou, led various high level speakers to share best practices and community interventions geared at reducing child marriage, and promoting women and girls' wellbeing that has largely contributed to reduce the fertility rate in Niger.*

Diplomacy and Demographic Dividend

Engagements with governments and their representatives remained constant in the course of the year. As an ongoing practice, 2018 started with a presentation of the 2017 Annual Report to members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to Dakar, Senegal. UNFPA Regional Director held a briefing session with Members of the Permanent Representative Missions of countries in the region to the United Nations, where he briefed them on the progress, opportunities and challenges in delivering UNFPA's mandate in the region.

UN Youth Envoy tours the region

- > *UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, visited four countries in the region to embolden our demographic dividend message. The Youth Special Envoy delivered a strong message to policy makers advocating for increased investment in education, and paid courtesy visit to our Fass-Guele-Tapee-Coloban initiative.*

Population and Housing Census Vital in Harnessing Demographic Dividend

→ *In anticipation of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses, UNFPA West WCARO held a five-day capacity building workshop on the processes of the general population and housing census of West and Central Africa region and its links to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.*



UNFPA Supports African Youth SDGs Summit in Ghana

Africa's population is predominantly made up of youth people. In West and Central Africa, with almost 60% of the population under the age of 24, young people are the most precious resources of the region. It is often said that Africa can only thrive when the young people thrive.

The potential of the youth will only be realized when we invest in their education, health, skills and empowerment, as well as provide them with a conducive environment wherein they can make informed choices. These investments together are the pre-conditions sine qua non for Africa harnessing its demographic dividend.

Catalytic partnership: Muskoka Renews Trust

The French Muskoka Fund (FFM), planned over 5 years and then extended to 2 additional years, was confirmed in 2018, following its good results, for a new 5-year cycle (2018-2022) for an amount of 10 million euros per year, including 3 million euros for UNFPA.

—> *Also announced in 2018 is Denmark's entry into the Muskoka mechanism, with the first financial allocation expected in early 2019, thus opening the door to a broader and stronger Muskoka for the years to come in the region.*



Throughout 2018, our activities were aimed at bolstering the regions potential for harnessing a demographic dividend as an anchor for sustainable development. They placed emphasis on sustaining and complementing country level efforts to attain universal access to sexual and reproductive health and advancing progress towards the achievement of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

In 2019, we will join the international community to mark twenty-five years of the ICPD as well as commemorate UNFPA's 50th anniversary.

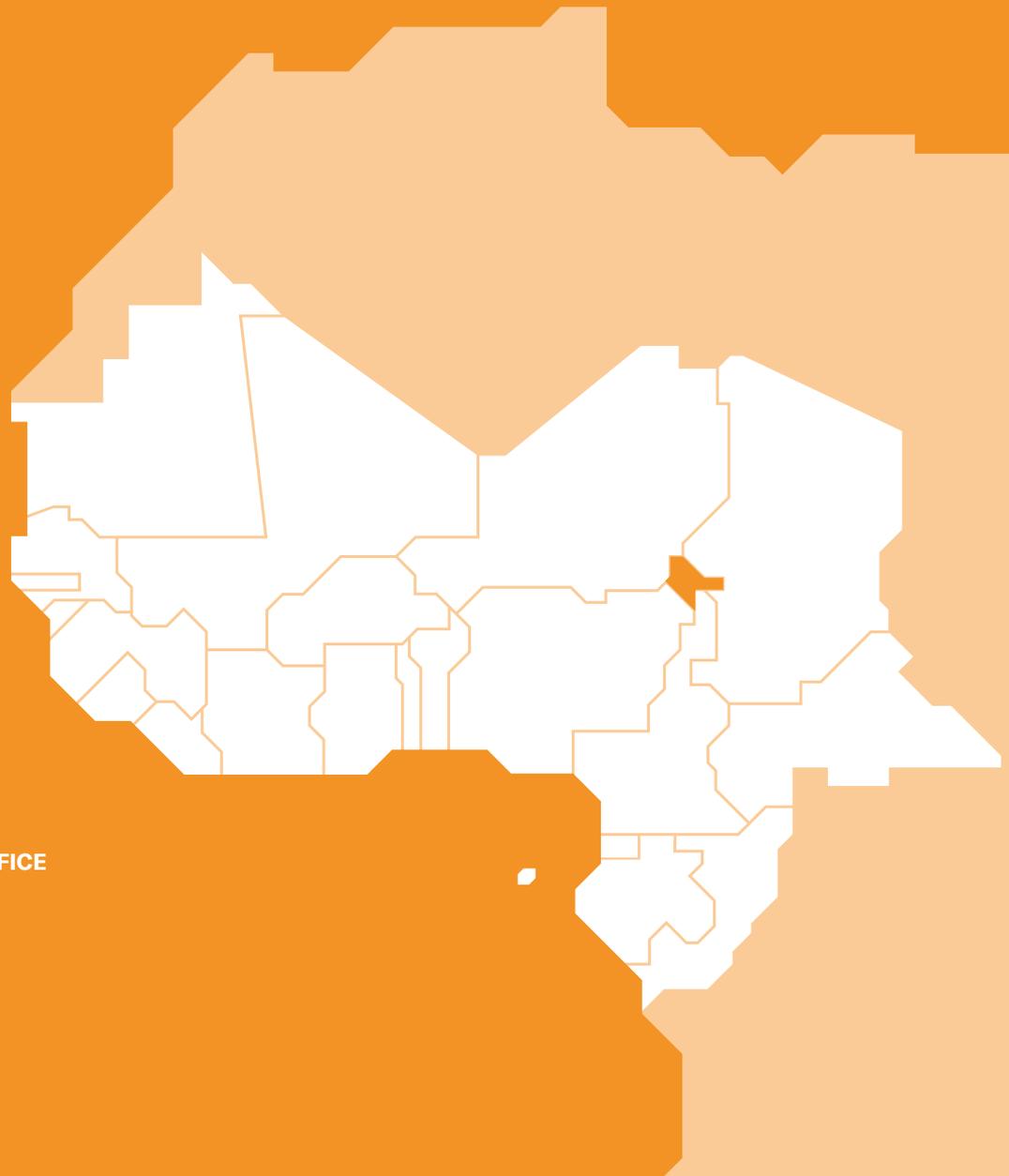


Excerpts of a photo album "24 hours with young people" from Muskoka fund project countries, produced to raise awareness on the precarious situation of the young people.

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