



# SWEDD

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

AUTONOMISATION  
DES FEMMES ET  
DIVIDENDE  
DÉMOGRAPHIQUE  
AU SAHEL

SAHEL WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT  
AND  
DEMOGRAPHIC  
DIVIDEND



BENIN BURKINA FASO CAMEROON CHAD COTE D'IVOIRE THE GAMBIA GUINEA MALI MAURITANIA NIGER SENEGAL TOGO



THE WORLD BANK  
IBRD • IDA





Women's empowerment  
and demographic  
dividend project  
in the Sahel – SWEDD

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Prepared by the  
Regional Technical Secretariat

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This innovative partnership has helped to promote the empowerment of women and girls and the capture of the demographic dividend in Africa.



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## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>BSDD</b>	Budgeting for the Demographic Dividend
<b>CCU</b>	Country Coordination Unit
<b>CHMP</b>	Centre Humanitaire des Métiers de la Pharmacie (Humanitarian Centre for Pharmacy Professions)
<b>CoE</b>	Centre of Excellence
<b>CREG</b>	Centre de Recherche en Économie Générationnelle (Regional Consortium for Generational Economics Research)
<b>SBCC</b>	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
<b>DDMI</b>	Demographic Dividend Tracking Index
<b>DDNO</b>	Demographic Dividend National Observatory
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>NTA</b>	National Transfer Account
<b>PAD</b>	Project Assessment Document
<b>PMU</b>	Project/Programme Management Unit
<b>RMNCNH</b>	Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Nutritional Health
<b>RTS</b>	Regional Technical Secretariat
<b>SSA/P</b>	Stratégie Scolarisation Accélérée Passerelle
<b>SWEDD</b>	Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>WAHO</b>	West African Health Organization

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2023 was a crucial year for the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) project. It marked the transition to the SWEDD+ expansion phase, which included the integration of three new countries and the strengthening of funding in two countries. The new phase of the project is a testament to the success of the interventions and the commitment of the project team to improving the lives of women and girls in the region.

## **COMPONENT 1:**

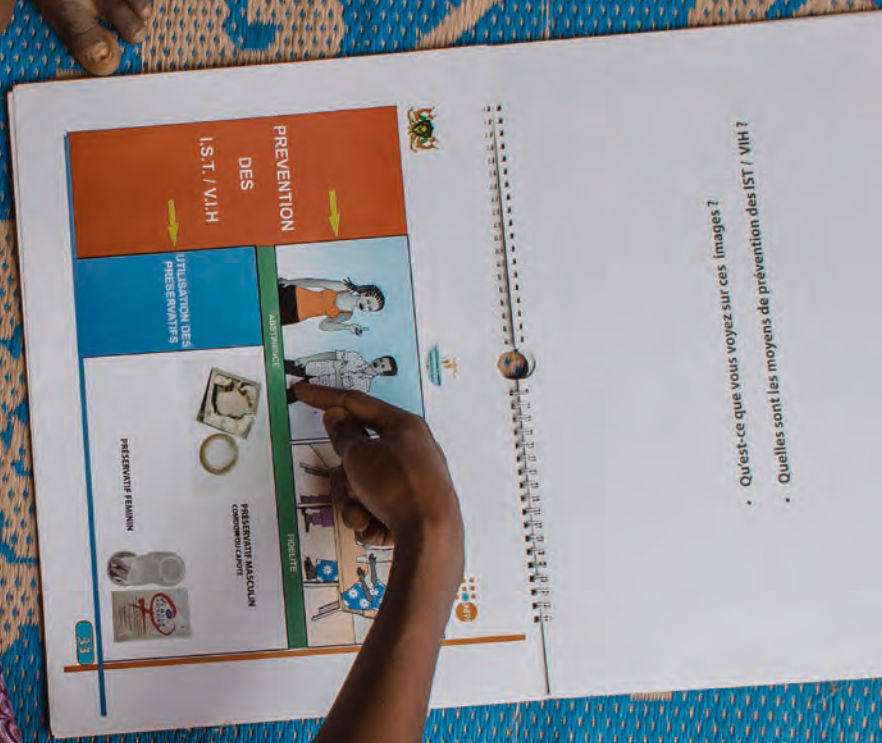
### **Improving regional demand for health services and empowering women and adolescent girls**

There has been significant progress in communication, awareness-raising and women's empowerment activities. National communication strategies have been finalized in most countries. Several outreach activities have been deployed in the field, including tours and the distribution of school supplies to vulnerable girls. Additionally, women have been empowered economically, girls have been provided with economic support, and training has been provided in life skills, reproductive health, and the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) through a revised curriculum that is adapted to the local context. Lastly, a study has been conducted on school dropouts.

Husbands' clubs and future husbands' clubs have been using good practices to engage men and teenagers as agents of change in gender norms. One lesson learned is that involving other members of the spouses' or learners' families helps reinforce positive gender norms in the household. Strengthening collaboration with traditional and religious leaders in areas where interventions are taking place can help encourage men to get involved.

Furthermore, the network of community and school-based safe spaces has been greatly expanded, allowing hundreds of thousands of teenage girls and young women to attend. An adapted curriculum and the active participation of teenage girls and young women in an engaging and fun environment have enabled them to receive training in life skills and reproductive health.





- Qu'est-ce que vous voyez sur ces images ?
- Quelles sont les moyens de prévention des IST / VIH ?



The **Stronger Together** campaign continued in 2023, focusing on the themes of *Girls' Education and Football* and *Women's Leadership* by forging innovative partnerships with football stars.

### Results<sup>(1)</sup> to reinforce social change

- **100 per cent** of countries have finalized their national communication strategies, including media and digital plans.
- The **Stronger Together** campaign aimed at young people reached 86 million people through media coverage.
- More than **3.5 million** people were reached through communication activities such as awareness-raising tours.
- **665,390** vulnerable girls received support for schooling, including transport services, accommodation, food, school supplies and extra lessons to encourage them to enrol and stay in secondary school (**resulting in a 96 per cent** retention rate in secondary education).
- There are **5,708** safe spaces for girls that are operational and training **400,760** young women and adoles-

cent girls in life skills, economic empowerment, sexual and reproductive health, and the fight against GBV.

- There are **594** functional husbands' clubs for **18,988** beneficiaries and **1,407** future husbands' clubs for **28,580** beneficiaries that implement gender transformation programmes to reduce GBV and increase the number of prenatal visits and sharing of household tasks.
- The mapping of interventions with economic potential in **five** SWEDD countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania and Niger) highlights the importance of ongoing awareness-raising, political commitment, collaboration between stakeholders and the application of laws to create an environment conducive to gender equality.
- The implementing partners increased coordination and harmonization to adapt to technical assistance needs.

The results have led to a higher demand for reproductive health services and increased the level of empowerment among women and adolescent girls.

## COMPONENT 2:

### Strengthening regional capacity and the availability of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and nutritional health (RMNCNH) products and health workers

Component 2 has achieved remarkable results in reproductive health through various initiatives. These include the use of modern contraceptive methods, the availability of maternal and child health products and ongoing training to improve the quality of reproductive health care. A regional study on the added value of centres of excellence (CoEs) has been carried out and new ways of accelerating last-mile distribution have been identified.

It is essential to have trained and motivated community members for the success of community-based distribution. These individuals can raise awareness among beneficiaries, collect and report data, and in some cases, offer contraceptive methods. Mentoring is a practical and acceptable way to make up for any shortcomings in basic training, and to encourage midwives to update their skills. It is important to adopt consensual criteria for selecting mentors.

### Evidence and innovation to strengthen programming

- At the regional level, the number of new users of modern contraceptive methods far exceeded forecasts, reaching **1,005,710** against an initial target of **702,000**.
- **63.2 per cent** of graduates from the Abidjan CoE and **74.2 per cent** from the Niamey CoE obtained a new job or position at the end of their training.
- **95 per cent** of graduates from the Abidjan CoE and **100 per cent** of graduates from the Niamey CoE who work in RMNCNH structures claim to bring added value to their work. **84.3 per cent** of graduates work in a SWEDD project area.
- Innovative initiatives have been developed, such as the use of **the stock management application** to alert on the levels of RMNCNH products. This is aimed at

(1) The figures result from the SWEDD country results framework compiled at regional level.

improving the monitoring of community-based distribution and the deployment of the community-based distribution system in nine countries.

- The availability of maternal and child health products has improved significantly at service delivery points.
- Pilot projects in **five** countries (Benin, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Mauritania) continue to strengthen the supply chain.
- Countries have identified five best practices and developed road maps for the last-mile distribution of reproductive health products.

→ **13,000** midwives have been able to complete their continuing training as part of the drive to improve the quality of reproductive health care.

→ **63 midwife mentors** were identified and their skills strengthened in nine countries.

These results have helped to increase the national capacity to make RMNCNH products and qualified health workers available.

### COMPONENT 3:

## Strengthening advocacy and political commitment in favour of RMNCNH

In 2023, several activities have been carried out to consolidate national capacities in favour of reproductive, maternal and child health. These activities include capacity-building, political advocacy and community involvement. Community and religious leaders have been involved, and budgeting for the demographic dividend (BSDD) has been implemented.

The involvement of religious and traditional leaders has been instrumental in correcting misinterpretations of faith and improving reproductive health services. A database of guides has been created of communication materials produced by religious leaders for adolescent girls and young women, providing important advocacy tools.

One lesson learned from BSDD is that it is important to involve sectoral department managers more closely at all stages. This will lead to better allocation of the budget for the demographic dividend tool, as well as advocacy and capacity-building for planning actors at national, sectoral and local levels. The goal is to make BSDD a tool of strategic choice.

#### Implementation to strengthen policies and advocacy

- The legal teams from **nine** countries have revitalized their platform by sharing experiences and developing action plans to promote women's rights.
- Demographic dividend budgeting in **Mali** has increased the budget of the Ministry of Health by two points from **26 per cent to 28 per cent**. This process, which includes strong advocacy by the government and parliamentarians, is under way in several other countries.

→ **17,601** community and religious leaders have been mobilized to promote gender equality.

→ National observatories on the demographic dividend have been set up in **two countries** (Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea) to inform public policy.

#### Documentation of intervention processes

In 2023, a major activity was capitalizing on the processes that have marked 13 of the project's key interventions across its three components. This provided a unique strategic framework for these themes.

This work is compiled in a participatory manner with the countries, the World Bank, United Nations Population Fund and partners. It includes lessons and good practices on aspects such as beneficiary selection and training, procedures for setting up community spaces and accountability of civil servants and community agents. This documentation will be used to enhance the implementation of interventions for SWEDD+ and to motivate other regional initiatives for the empowerment of women and girls. Its appropriation by the countries and partners will be essential to anchor these achievements and extend the benefits of the project to new areas and countries.

For 2024, the major challenge will be to transform these results into lasting impacts for women and girls in their daily lives.

# INTRODUCTION

The Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend in Sub-Saharan Africa (SWEDD) project is a regional initiative funded by the World Bank. It involves 12 countries in West and Central Africa. Other partners include the West African Health Organization (WAHO), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Technical Body for Health, and the African Union. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), regional and country offices, coordinate with organizations such as the Population Council, Equimundo, the Centre Humanitaire des Métiers de la Pharmacie (CHMP),<sup>(2)</sup> Plan International West and Central Africa, the Regional Consortium for Research in Generational Economics, and Johns Hopkins University to provide technical assistance and support governments in the implementation of the project.

The project is part of the commitment of the World Bank, the United Nations and the African Union to support countries in reducing gender inequalities. The aim is to capture the demographic dividend through deliberate investment in human capital, with a focus on adolescent education and women's empowerment. The overall objective of the project is to accelerate the demographic transition, stimulate the demographic dividend and reduce gender inequalities in participating countries.

The SWEDD project interventions are structured around three components:

1. Improve regional demand for health services and increase the empowerment of women and adolescent girls through gender-transforming interventions in the four Es<sup>(3)</sup> that promote the social and economic autonomy of girls and women.
2. Strengthen regional capacity for adolescent-friendly services and improve the availability of RMNCNH products, as well as skilled health workers in RMNCNH at community level.
3. Encourage national and regional capacities to commit to policy development and project implementation, and strengthen them.

The Regional Steering Committee, composed of the ministers responsible for the project in each country, is entrusted with the governance of the project. The Regional Technical Secretariat (RTS), provided by a unit of the UNFPA Regional Office for West and Central Africa, supports the Committee.

(2) Humanitarian Centre for Pharmacy Professions.

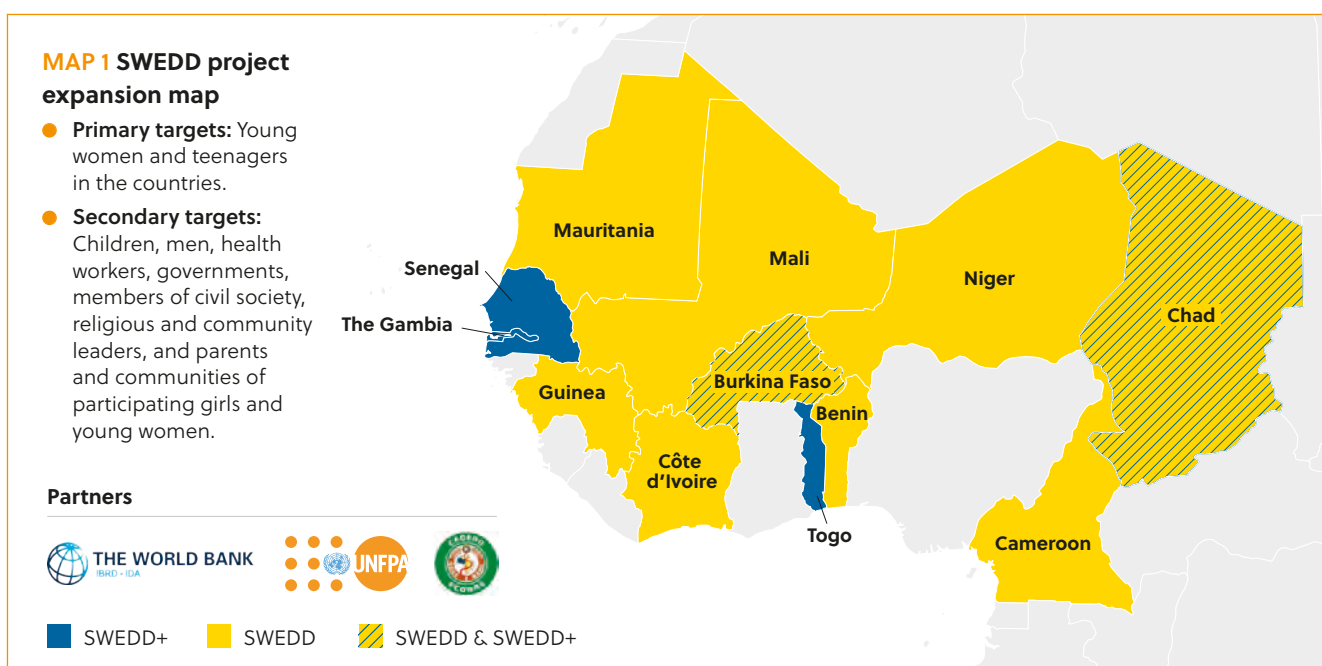
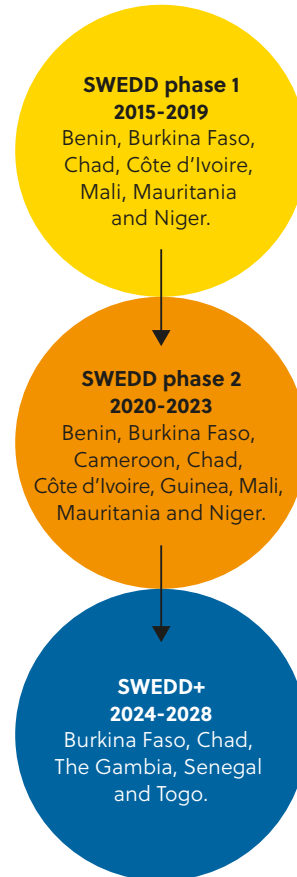
(3) The four Es refer to: 1) **Educate** and keep girls in school until at least secondary school; 2) **Enhance** health services (with a focus on adolescents); 3) **Employ** young women in high-income jobs and improve financial inclusion; and 4) **Empower** women through increased equality and agency in society and under the law, and protection from all kinds of violence.

The SWEDD project was launched in 2015 in Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Between 2019 and 2020, the project gradually extended to Benin, Cameroon and Guinea. The SWEDD+ project was launched in 2023, covering three new countries (Gambia, Senegal and Togo) and strengthening resources for two old countries (Burkina Faso and Chad) for the period 2024–2028. The project will be extended to the Economic Community of Central African States and the gender department of ECOWAS.

This expansion has been made possible due to the success of the previous achievements of the countries and the positive assessment by the World Bank. It is committed to greater mobilization of financial and technical resources.

The year 2023 was marked by activities aimed at significantly extending SWEDD interventions through ambitious annual plans. These initiatives were designed to continue the interventions while anticipating and overcoming possible delays in achieving the objectives. At the same time, the new countries have completed the preparation of the SWEDD+ Project, including drafting project assessment documents (PADs) and environmental and social safeguard plans. They have also established management units using the preparation funds that were made available to them.

FIGURE 1 Expansion phase of the SWEDD project





# MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2023

This chapter highlights the achievements of the SWEDD programme in the beneficiary countries during 2023. It includes information from evaluation reports of the management units in each country, as well as data from regional and national results frameworks. Additionally, the chapter incorporates the results of studies conducted by partners who provided technical support for the implementation of activities.

The report is structured according to the project's components and subcomponents.

**CHAPTER I.**

**Improving regional demand for health care services and empowering women and adolescent girls**

This component aims to increase demand for reproductive, maternal, neonatal, infant and nutritional health services by (i) raising public awareness of these services and (ii) strengthening the status of girls and women.

This component represents the very essence of the SWEDD project, encompassing the communication component for social and behavioural change, as well as community interventions aimed at reducing the vulnerabilities that are affecting adolescent girls and women. They are empowered through a set of integrated activities, including training, life

skills development, sexual and reproductive health, gender awareness, vocational training and support for economic initiatives. This component also includes educating girls and raising men's awareness of the need to adopt positive masculinity.





## 1.1. Social and behavioural change communication

In 2023, countries made significant progress in finalizing and validating national strategies for Social and behaviour change communication (SBCC).

### 1. Updating SBCC strategies

Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali and Niger received support from the RTS and its partner, John Hopkins University<sup>(4)</sup>. The analysis carried out by John Hopkins University reveals that between 2017 and 2020, the SBCC activities deployed by the nine coun-

tries have contributed significantly to the development of more effective strategies adapted to their contexts. Since 2017, significant progress has been made in terms of SBCC through media campaigns, the mobilization of key influencers, and community outreach, as revealed in the report. Nevertheless, some countries still face challenges in terms of message targeting, budget, coordination and coverage.

The country reports highlight the key activities, challenges encountered and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the SBCC strategies.

**TABLE 1** Key activities, challenges encountered and recommendations

Country	Key activities	Challenges	Recommendations
Burkina Faso	Involvement of traditional chiefs.	Poor coverage of insecure areas and lack of visibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update communication analyses.</li> <li>• Improve integration of issues such as GBV.</li> <li>• Strengthen partnerships with community radio stations.</li> </ul>
Cameroon	The Stronger Together campaign.	Lack of visibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the national strategy.</li> <li>• Involve the ministries more.</li> <li>• Adapt messages to local contexts.</li> </ul>
Chad	Reproductive health and women's empowerment.	Persistent misconceptions about family planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out extensive awareness campaigns.</li> <li>• Increase the commitment of religious leaders.</li> <li>• Improve coordination and visibility.</li> </ul>
Côte d'Ivoire	Emphasis on strengthening media campaigns and partnerships with civil society.	Late launch and insufficient budgets for activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate the national communication campaign.</li> <li>• Roll out regional campaigns.</li> <li>• Work better with religious leaders.</li> </ul>
Guinea	Awareness-raising activities on gender and GBV.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize information sessions.</li> <li>• Roll out mass communication campaigns.</li> <li>• Formalize social contracts with communities.</li> </ul>
Mali	Focus on improving knowledge of reproductive health, reducing child marriage and empowering women.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit a communications expert.</li> <li>• Improve coordination of activities in the field.</li> </ul>
Niger	Awareness-raising tours and media campaigns.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen coordination between players and mobilization at local level.</li> </ul>

(4) Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis of Communication Activities for Social and Behavioural Change, 2023.

2. Country SBCC activities

TABLE 2 Impact of communication campaigns at community level

Country	Key activities
Benin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribution of <b>5,460 school kits</b> to vulnerable girls.</li> <li>• Training of <b>54 community bloggers</b> from four departments.</li> <li>• Training of local technicians and communicators in digital communication and the creation of educational stories.</li> </ul>
Côte d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A campaign against early marriage was launched on a WhatsApp group. The group is run by Tanon Ruth Amadine Oro, a young communications student and ambassador for the Stronger Together campaign. The campaign has enabled secondary school girls to learn about their rights to education, health, including sexual and reproductive health, and how to escape forced marriage.*</li> </ul>
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strong involvement of religious leaders: 100 preachings</b> in mosques and churches as part of #StrongerTogether. Religious leaders <b>produced advocacy capsules</b> for distribution in places of worship.</li> <li>• <b>Distribution of bicycles to 3,500 vulnerable girls</b> in the regions of Sikasso, Kayes, Koulikoro, Ségou and Mopti.</li> <li>• Community radio broadcasts of courses given in safe spaces.</li> </ul>
Mauritania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant progress in raising awareness: gross rate of <b>103.9 per cent</b> of girls in primary education and <b>32.7 per cent</b> in secondary education.</li> <li>• The Minister of Education undertook an awareness-raising visit in Néma that reached <b>45,000 pupils</b> and <b>850 teachers</b> in <b>55 schools</b>.</li> <li>• The audience for the dedicated Facebook page doubled to <b>6,700 subscribers</b>.</li> </ul>

\* Thanks to this group, 16-year-old Kiemtore Nakiatou's marriage has been stopped. Nakiatou hopes to continue her studies and contribute to the fight against early marriage. Approximately 29 per cent of girls in her country are married before the age of 18, and 10 per cent before the age of 15. Miss Zadi Grâce Emmanuelle, one of the campaigners and a beneficiary of educational support from the SWEDD project, completed her first cycle of secondary school with honours (15.72/20).

Results in Benin

- During the workshop, **105 journalists** produced 60 articles and five audiovisual and digital supports for community radio stations in print, audiovisual and online media. The goal was to strengthen the mechanism for monitoring the productions of the thematic groups and the appropriation of the method for using the Gender Index of the Demographic Dividend application.
- **3,000 participants** took part in 12 public conferences on the issue of keeping girls in school. They duplicated the information in their communities to 75,000 people throughout the country.
- **5,100 motorbike taxi drivers** were trained. They wore SWEDD-branded jackets while on awareness-raising missions in their environment, impacting **510,000 people**.
- **2,150 teenage girls, women and boys** were impacted by film screenings, which were followed by debates in 43 communes on sexual and reproductive health and family planning.
- **4,000 teenage girls, future husbands**, parents, teachers and administrators were impacted by film screenings followed by debates in eight secondary schools on unwanted pregnancies.
- **30 microprogrammes, eight magazines and six round tables** were produced as part of the implementation of the contract between SWEDD and 45 radio stations (community, denominational and commercial) during training sessions for the production of standard capitalization programmes with 90 radio focal points.
- **30 women media professionals produced 10 radio programmes, 30 articles** for the written press, 22 microprogrammes, three audiovisual aids for tele-



vision and two blogs as part of capacity-building on the themes covered by the SBCC strategy.

- **5,390 traditional chiefs and religious leaders** (leaders of endogenous, Christian and Muslim religions) were sensitized in 77 communes to change the barriers to women's empowerment.
- **One 13-minute documentary** on the Stronger Together awareness campaign media tour.

### Results in Chad

The main achievements and key figures of the Stronger Together campaign in Chad in 2023 included:

- Broadcasting more than **2,384 radio adverts** in the provinces, reaching **1.1 million** people.
- Organizing conference debates that were attended by **10,083** people.
- Producing audio spots on GBV in French and Arabic.
- Dubbing existing commercials in **15 local languages**.
- Producing and broadcasting **60 creatives** and **25 videos** on the networks.
- Conducting **Karima-SWEDD** platform activities, including television series, comic strips and videos.
- Broadcasting interactive television programmes on girls' education and women's empowerment.
- Ensuring that the #Stronger Together campaign reached **6,000** teenage girls and **300** opinion leaders.
- Reaching **7.2 million** people by community radio.
- Mobilizing **two** musicians for national tours.
- Helping **3,000** young girls to benefit from mobile clinics. These mobile clinics resulted in 2,197 new acceptors of family planning, 2,130 antenatal consultations, 8,899 curative consultations, 1,531 ultrasounds and 11,228 reached by IEC activities.

**We are adopting both a mass strategy (media and leaders) and a local strategy (national languages and tours) to reach several million people on these key issues.**

### Results in Côte d'Ivoire

- We are adopting both a mass strategy (media and leaders) and a local strategy (national languages and tours) to reach several million people on these key issues.
- Documentation on inspirational models for the SWEDD in Action publication.
- Production of a video on the use of digital technology.
- Participation in celebrations to mark International Women's Rights Day.
- **Four** national television **broadcasts** of reports on the awareness-raising tours.
- **72** television and **125** radio **repeats** of female role model ads.
- **56** radio **broadcasts** of the national single and 54 television broadcasts of the video clip.
- Signing of an agreement with the Alliance des Religieux pour la Santé Intégrale et la Promotion de la Personne Humaine<sup>(5)</sup> to organize community dialogues and advocacy with religious and traditional leaders.

(5) Alliance of Religious for Integral Health and the Promotion of the Human Person.

### Results in Mali

A total of 7.5 million people were affected:

- Numerous mass awareness campaigns were conducted through major cultural events such as the Festival sur le Niger (**35,392 people** reached), the Sikasso Festival (**10,712 people**), and the Kayes and Toukoto festivals, which collectively increased awareness among almost 50,000 people and recruited more than **2,300 new** contraceptive users.
- **Ten training sessions** have strengthened the skills of **250 faith-based school teachers** on reproductive health issues.
- Intergenerational dialogues led by **411 community** and religious leaders reached around **2,000 people**.
- Three community radios were set up in isolated areas, and at least **1,928 people** were reached directly during dedicated events or regional tours.
- At local level, partner non-governmental organizations have carried out more than **2,000 outreach activities**, reaching more than **3.5 million people**.

- One slam reached **60,000** people.
- **Two videos** of religious leaders.
- **Three regional films**.
- **Three awareness-raising adverts** for young people.
- **One video** on early pregnancy.
- A cotton sector forum attracted **5,000 participants**.
- A women's basketball tournament reached **3,000 people**.
- Girls' days reached **150,000 people**.
- **Four regions** were covered by an awareness-raising tour.
- **Five web** television transmissions reached **2 million people**.
- **100 religious** sermons reached **20,000 people**.
- **Three new adverts** for young people.

Political, religious and traditional leaders are key assets in disseminating the SWEDD project's key messages on reproductive health, girls' education and women's empowerment. The main challenges lie in the concrete and lasting transformation of mentalities and behaviours, but the Stronger Together campaign's scale of social mobilization is promising in this respect.

### Results in Mauritania

In 2023, this campaign has raised awareness among more than one million people in Mauritania through a wide range of actions:

- Updating the communication strategy and religious arguments.
- Training **30 journalists** and **220 imams** trained in SBCC.

- Broadcasting **12** radio spots broadcast in national languages.
- Publishing **71** online publications.
- Gaining **6,700** subscribers on Facebook.
- Organizing **360** community awareness-raising sessions conducted by women relays.

#### An approach combining the following has been adopted:

- Training of relays and opinion leaders.
- Awareness-raising in schools.
- Mass distribution via traditional media and social networks.
- Mobilization at local level via women intermediaries.

### 3. Regional Initiatives: Support to boost SBCC campaigns

The RTS has strengthened national activities through:

- Sharing experiences between countries at regional workshops.
- Organizing train-the-trainer sessions.
- Distributing SBCC materials and tools adapted to local contexts.
- Providing technical support for the design of SBCC campaigns, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

This regional support has made it possible to capitalize on good practices, strengthen national capacities and amplify the impact of SBCC activities in the countries concerned. The results demonstrate the added value of this regional coordination, which complements the efforts made at country level in 2023.

### 4. The Footballers' Mobilization Campaign



The Stronger Together 2022 campaign was extended to 2023, with the highlight being the partnership with football celebrities to promote SWEDD themes.

More than 30 footballers, their federations and Mrs Fatma Samba Diouf Samoura, FIFA General Secretary, were made aware of the campaign. They recorded 14 videos to support the campaign and produced 14 digital cards with messages for social networks.

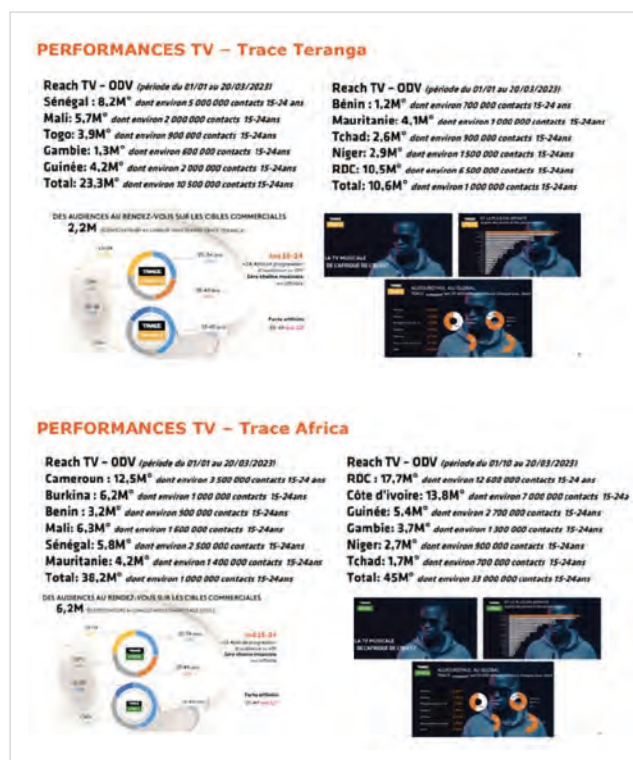
The partnership provided a way to reach a broad and diverse audience, particularly young people, which sparked conversations about important issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment. Between 15 February and 31 March 2023, the campaign's social media posts, videos, television shows, community outreach and other content generated significant engagement and positive feedback with 566,000 impressions. The number of people reached has increased compared to previous campaigns. In total, the campaign recorded 86 million impressions, more than double the number for the same period in 2022 (30 million).

Footballers have been able to use their platform and influence to raise public awareness of the negative effects of harmful practices on the empowerment of women and girls through this campaign. They also encouraged positive attitudes towards advancing women's and girls' rights to health, education and gender equality.

Footballers from Chad and Niger have broadcast messages to encourage girls to attend school. These two countries have the lowest secondary school enrolment rates for girls in the world, with Niger at 29 per cent and Chad at 23 per cent. Bassam from Mauritania spoke out against child marriage in his country, where the child marriage rate is one of the highest in the world (37 per cent of girls are married before the age of 18 and 12 per cent before the age of 15).

## 5. Media and digital engagement

The TRACE media channel, which targets young people aged 16 to 34, was used to disseminate the **Stronger Together** campaign by broadcasting audiovisual material, including single, animated spots, educational films and television programmes.



## 6. Development of two strategic tools: website and knowledge management and sharing platform for the SWEDD project

In 2023, the RTS and the World Bank regional team reworked the [www.sweddafrica.org](http://www.sweddafrica.org) website. The aim is to create a new high-quality SWEDD website, which will serve as a platform for sharing experiences and good practice, while highlighting the impact of SWEDD in each participating country.

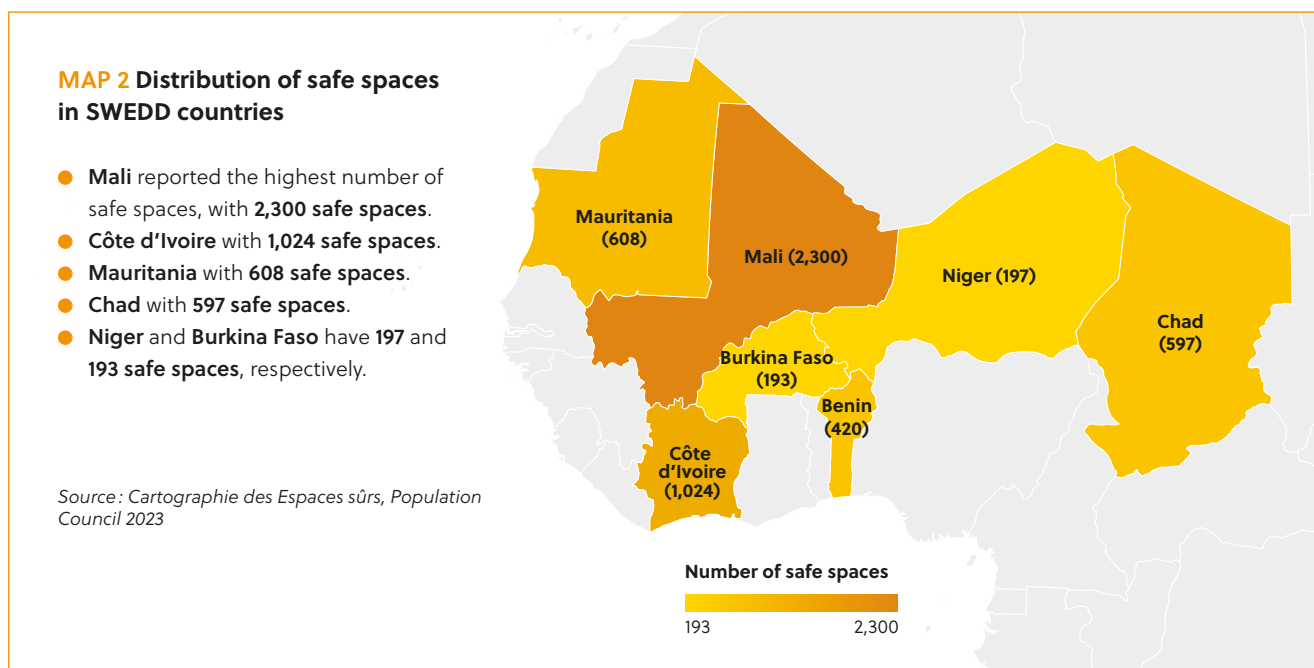
In 2023, the knowledge management platform, SWED-DKnowledge, was optimized into two collaborative spaces, namely the Knowledge Management Platform and Community of Practice.

## 1.2. Actions to empower women

Four interventions are being implemented to generate demand for RMNCNH, which include (i) improving the life skills of adolescent girls and young women through community and school-based safe spaces, promoting positive masculinity, and transforming social gender norms by supporting the establishment of husbands’ clubs and future husbands’ clubs; (ii) keeping girls in school; (iii) ensuring economic empowerment of young women; and (iv) combating GBV.

### 1. Improving the life skills of adolescent girls and young women

Map 2 shows the distribution of the safe spaces created in the SWEDD countries in 2023. The number of safe spaces, future husbands’ clubs and husbands’ clubs varies between countries.



**TABLE 3** Number of safe spaces, future husbands’ clubs and husbands’ clubs and their beneficiaries in 2023

Country	Safe Spaces		Future Husbands’ Clubs		Husbands’ Clubs	
	Number	Beneficiaries	Number	Beneficiaries	Number	Beneficiaries
Chad	597	26,416				
Benin	789	186,971	258	14,098	274	13,915
Burkina Faso	193	6,807	120	1,857	30	361
Côte d’Ivoire	1,024	18,293	215	3,651	215	3,651
Mali	2,300	9,112	75	1,015	75	1,061
Mauritania	608	16,700	73	1,833	-	-
Niger	197	29,047	666	7,959	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,708</b>	<b>293 346</b>	<b>1,407</b>	<b>30,413</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>18,988</b>

## Impact assessment in Côte d'Ivoire

The World Bank led an impact evaluation study entitled Empowering Adolescent Girls through Safe Spaces and Supportive Measures in Côte d'Ivoire, which was one of the main activities of 2023. The study examined the impact of safe spaces for adolescent girls on girls' marriage, fertility and empowerment outcomes when combined with supportive interventions. The evaluation used data from over 3,000 out-of-school girls in 280 rural and urban localities in northern Côte d'Ivoire.

Localities were randomly assigned to one of five groups: (i) a pure control group; (ii) a control group with spillover effects; (iii) a group with safe spaces only; (iv) a group with safe spaces and livelihood support interventions; and (v)

a group with safe spaces and husbands' clubs and future husbands' clubs. The safe space groups were cross-randomized with an intervention to engage community and religious leaders. One year after the end of the interventions, the study found no significant impact on girls' marriage or fertility on average. Although safe spaces alone appear to have a limited impact on girls' empowerment, safe spaces combined with interventions aimed at improving adolescent girls' economic opportunities or with husbands' clubs and future husbands' clubs prove to be the most effective. In conclusion, the engagement of leaders in the context of safe space interventions has a mixed impact on girls' empowerment.

### Some lessons learned from the optimization of husbands' clubs and future husbands' clubs:

- Involving other family members, in addition to the direct participants, helps to catalyse a positive change in gender dynamics within households.
- Collaborating closely with traditional and religious leaders in the target communities has proved essential in encouraging men to participate more in these clubs. Their support lends legitimacy to the clubs and encourages men to become actively involved.
- Establishing a large network of safe spaces, both community and school-based, has welcomed hundreds of thousands of teenage girls and young women. They have been able to receive training in life skills and reproductive health, thanks to a number of success factors:
  - A training curriculum tailored to their needs and realities.
  - Participative and fun methods (such as games and songs) to encourage their active involvement.
  - A welcoming and stimulating environment that motivates them to use the facilities regularly.

This approach has attracted the support and sustained interest of teenage girls and young women, ensuring a high level of participation over the long term. The safe spaces have become places of learning, exchange and development for the target population of the SWEDD project.

## 2. Keeping girls in school

In 2023, a multidimensional approach was used to keep girls in school. The approach combined material, educational and financial support, as well as strong community involvement. The approach has had a significant impact on keeping girls in school as demonstrated by the excellent retention rates achieved in most countries.

In addition, a number of **good practices** for keeping girls in school, drawn from the experiences of the SWEDD project, have been identified:

1. **Providing material support tailored to the needs of vulnerable girls:** Targeted support such as school supplies, textbooks, menstrual hygiene kits, bicycles/transport money, accommodation and food have helped to remove practical barriers to education for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds.
2. **Offering more educational support:** Remedial courses, tutoring and close monitoring by tutors have helped girls with difficulties to catch up, pass their exams and continue their education in good conditions.
3. **Including sexual and reproductive health education:** By addressing these essential subjects in safe spaces and schools, girls gain the knowledge and confidence to make informed choices, avoid early pregnancies and stay in school longer.
4. **Using financial incentives conditional on attendance:** School grants or cash transfers to families, conditional on girls' regular attendance at school, are an effective way of encouraging girls to stay in the education system.
5. **Raising community awareness:** Social mobilization activities, such as village assemblies, involving parents, leaders and the young people themselves, help to change attitudes in favour of girls' education.

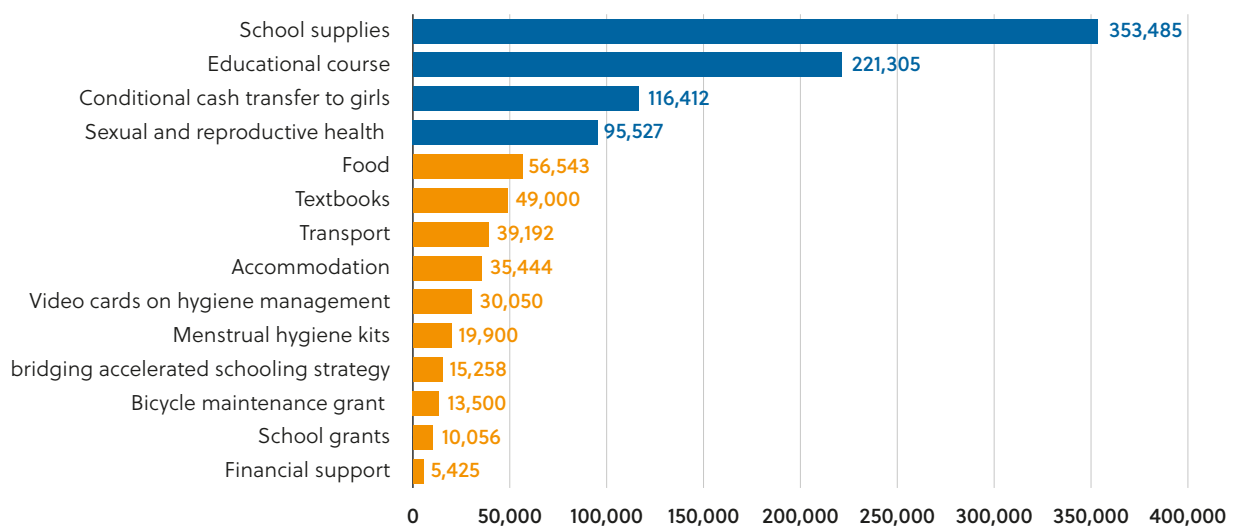




- 6. Actively combating harmful practices such as child marriage:** Sustained lobbying of traditional and religious authorities, coupled with information sessions in the communities, is helping to put an end to these traditions, which hinder girls' schooling.
- 7. Closely monitoring girls' school retention and success indicators:** Regular collection of disaggregated data has made it possible to measure progress, identify the schools with the greatest difficulties and adjust interventions accordingly.

In 2023, a number of support services were provided to help girls stay in school. A total of **1,050,472 beneficiaries** has received support, with certain interventions being provided more frequently than others. These interventions included school supplies, teaching courses, sexual and reproductive health education and conditional cash transfers, as they have been shown to have a direct impact on girls' attendance and performance at school.

**FIGURE 2 Interventions to keep girls in school**



Several initiatives have been implemented in the countries to reduce traditional practices that are harmful to keeping girls in school. These initiatives aim to improve girls' knowledge of life skills and reproductive health.

#### In Benin

Efforts to keep girls in school include distributing school kits, providing conditional cash transfers to vulnerable girls and awarding university scholarships to the best girls in the Industrial Science as well as the Technology and Agricultural Science and Technology streams.

- **33,557 girls** received school kits including uniforms, sun bags, books and school supplies.
- **182 girls** received university scholarships.
- **118 girls** received Industrial Science and Technology/ Agricultural Science and Technology scholarships.
- **28,209 girls** received conditional cash transfers at the rate of FCFA 450 per day for 20 days a month for 10 months a year for primary school girls and FCFA 600 per day for 20 days a month for 10 months a year for secondary school girls.

- **77** communal committees were created with 945 members.
- **882** monitoring committees were founded in establishments with a total of 6,139 members.
- **97%** of the girls supported by the project continue their studies.

#### In Chad

- Distributing **17,958 kits** to **8,979** vulnerable pupils during the 2023 school year, in 250 educational establishments targeted by the project, out of a total of **18,000** kits planned.
- Distributing **8,296** school uniforms to **4,148** pupils from poor families in the project's 12 provinces, out of the **4,200** planned. It should be noted that the distribution took place twice during 2023, covering the 2022 – 2023 and 2023 – 2024 school years.
- Renting reception centres to care for 600 girls: 24 reception centres spread across the four project provinces (Salamat, Lac, Kanem and Hadjer Lamis).
- Covering the medical costs of girls in reception centres: 52 girls were treated. They benefited from 52 medical consultations, 52 treatments, four hospitalizations and

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023

- 12 emergency consultations. Malaria and typhoid fever were the diseases most frequently diagnosed.
- Staffing 24 reception centres, including 48 cooks (over 9 months) and 24 sentinels.
- Distributing 11.5 tons of foodstuffs to 24 reception centres in the project's 12 provinces and purchasing 1,000 kg of vegetables.
- Enabling **116 repeaters** to provide support to **1,860 learners at a cost of FCFA 40,000 per repeater**.
- Paying 77 mentors a monthly lump sum of FCFA 40,000.
- Covering the cost of snacks for **3,611 girls** in 77 safe schools in the 12 project areas.
- Organizing 1,152 outreach sessions for 1,364 beneficiaries. These sessions resulted in 171 girls returning to normal schooling – a rate of 12.53 per cent.
- Enabling **2,686 girls** who had dropped out of community safe spaces to return to formal education thanks to the advice and support of mentors.
- Reaching **3,315** people through community dialogues.
- Reaching **980** mentors through educational coaching.
- Reaching **3,216** people through educational talks.
- Enabling mentors to refer **9,926** girls and women to health and care facilities, including:
  - **1,292** women referred to the CSI for antenatal consultations.
  - **2,065** women referred for childbirth.
  - **5,530** women referred to integrated health centres for family planning.
  - **1,127** women referred to integrated health centres for postnatal consultations.

### In Mali

Major social mobilization activities (consultation frameworks, village assemblies, information days) were carried out in 622 schools, reaching more than 1,749,300 people. Interventions to support the enrolment and retention of girls in school included:

- Making it possible for 536 children to return to school through the Stratégie Scolarisation Accélérée Passerelle<sup>(6)</sup> (SSA/P) (Cohort 2).
- Building and setting up four community schools following SSA/P.
- Providing 54,480 girls in Primary School 2<sup>(7)</sup> with at least one SWEDD project grant in the 2022–2023 school year.

(6) Accelerated School Enrolment Gateway Strategy.

(7) The first cycle of basic education covers Grades 1<sup>re</sup> to 6<sup>e</sup>, and the second cycle of basic education covers Grades 7<sup>e</sup> to 9<sup>e</sup>.

(8) Fundamental Studies Diploma.

(9) 3<sup>rd</sup> year of secondary school.

(10) National Pedagogical Institute.

(11) General Inspection of National Education.

- Providing 46,526 girls in Basic 2 (partial data) with at least one type of support for the 2023–2024 school year.
- Training **30 girls** in saponification.
- Helping **20 girls** with school supplies.
- Training **30 girls** in leadership.
- Providing bikes to 500 vulnerable girls cycling more than three kms.
- Distributing school kits to 45,000 girls in Primary 2.
- Providing 9,112 guardians of vulnerable girls with accommodation support.
- Achieving a 98.48 per cent retention rate for girls in basic education for the 2022–2023 school year 2.
- Achieving a 61 per cent rate of progression to the next grade for girls benefiting from at least one SWEDD project support at Primary 2 level for the 2022–2023 school year.
- Achieving a 51.7 per cent admission rate for girls to the Diplôme d'Études Fondamentales<sup>(8)</sup> session in 2023 in SWEDD intervention schools compared with 47.39 per cent nationally, a difference of 4.31 percentage points.
- Covering 6,148 beneficiaries of remedial courses in 200 post-diploma establishments by the project's interventions, with a 99.6 per cent retention rate and 67 per cent rate of progression to the next class.

### In Mauritania

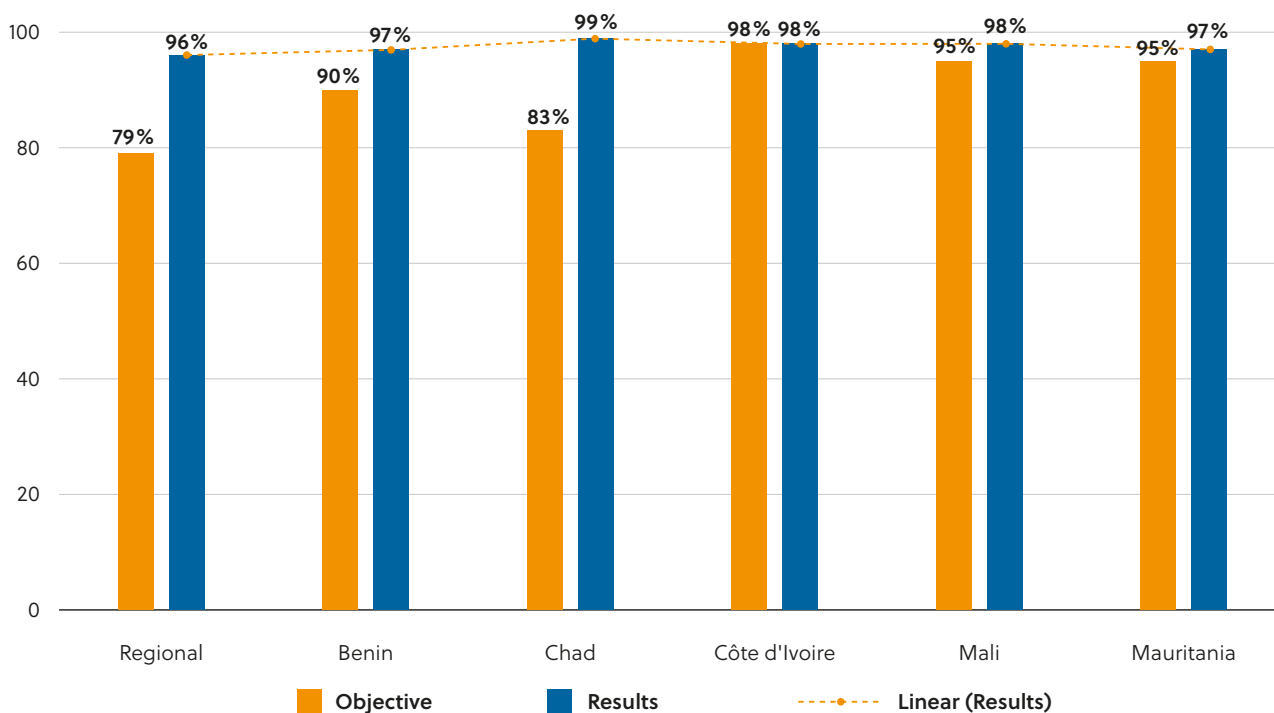
- Distributing bursaries to almost 10,000 girls from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Producing textbooks for the 3AS<sup>(9)</sup> (four textbooks to be printed at a rate of 10,000 copies per title, i.e. 40,000 textbooks to be distributed during the current school year).
- Making **850** school teachers aware of gender stereotypes.
- Making **600,000** parents aware of various issues.
- Reaching **71,369** pupils reached through classroom visits.
- Hosting **2,160** peer-to-peer talks.
- Distributing **60,109** school textbooks.
- Distributing **3,000** tablets containing all the products of the Institut Pédagogique National<sup>(10)</sup>, the Inspection Générale de l'Éducation Nationale<sup>(11)</sup> and SWEDD, in addition to 22 preparation workbooks for beginner teachers of basic subjects (three subjects per level).
- Distributing **6,000** school kits for secondary schools.
- Raising awareness of girls' education in the various secondary schools in the SWEDD zone.

### School retention rate for teenage girls

Figure 6 highlights the school retention rates of adolescent girls enrolled in secondary schools in the seven countries that are part of a project to increase enrolment. The graph also shows the targets set and the results achieved in 2023.

The majority of countries have met or exceeded their targets. Benin, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali and have school retention rates of 97–99 per cent (2023 updated results framework), which is in line with or above expectations.

**FIGURE 3 School retention rate of teenage girls enrolled in secondary schools in 2023**



Source: IODP#1

At regional level, the school retention rate was an excellent 96 per cent, exceeding the target of 79 per cent.

Overall, these results demonstrate very good performance in terms of retaining teenage girls in secondary school following the support measures put in place (including transport, accommodation and food).

### 3. Economic empowerment of young women

In 2023, skills training and work experience were the main types of support provided for economic empowerment. Over the entire period from 2015 to 2023, the greatest number of beneficiaries benefited from literacy training, income-generating activity start-ups and skills training.

### Number of beneficiaries in 2023

- Qualifying training benefited the greatest number of people, with 15,926 beneficiaries.
- The Work Experience scheme came second with 9,360 beneficiaries.
- No beneficiaries were reported in 2023 for income-generating activities financed, economic interest groups financed, implementation of income-generating activities, literacy, agrifood processing, building electricity, integration in trades traditionally reserved for men or innovative trades, sewing and mechanics.

**Cumulative number of beneficiaries (2015–2023)**

- Literacy had the highest number of beneficiaries over the cumulative period, with 41,268.
- Income-generating activities came second with 23,376 beneficiaries.
- Training leading to qualifications follows closely with 64,777 beneficiaries.
- The main forms of support were rounded off by income-generating activities financed with 10,425 beneficiaries, the work experience scheme financed with 22,302 beneficiaries, and the setting up of non-traditional businesses financed with 1,867 beneficiaries.

**TABLE 4 Economic empowerment of young women by type of support**

Number of beneficiaries by type of support	2023	Cumulative (2015–2023)
Income-generating activities financed	–	10,425
Economic interest groups financed	–	299
Income-generating activity implementation	–	23,376
Literacy	–	41,268
Qualifying training	15,926	64,777
Work experience section	9,360	22,302
Food processing	–	827
Building electricity	–	573
Integrating women in professions traditionally reserved for men or in innovative professions	–	1,867
Sewing	–	835
Mechanical engineering	–	537
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,286</b>	<b>167,086</b>

Source: SWEDD countries according to the RTS retrospective data framework



#### 4. Preventing and caring for survivors of GBV

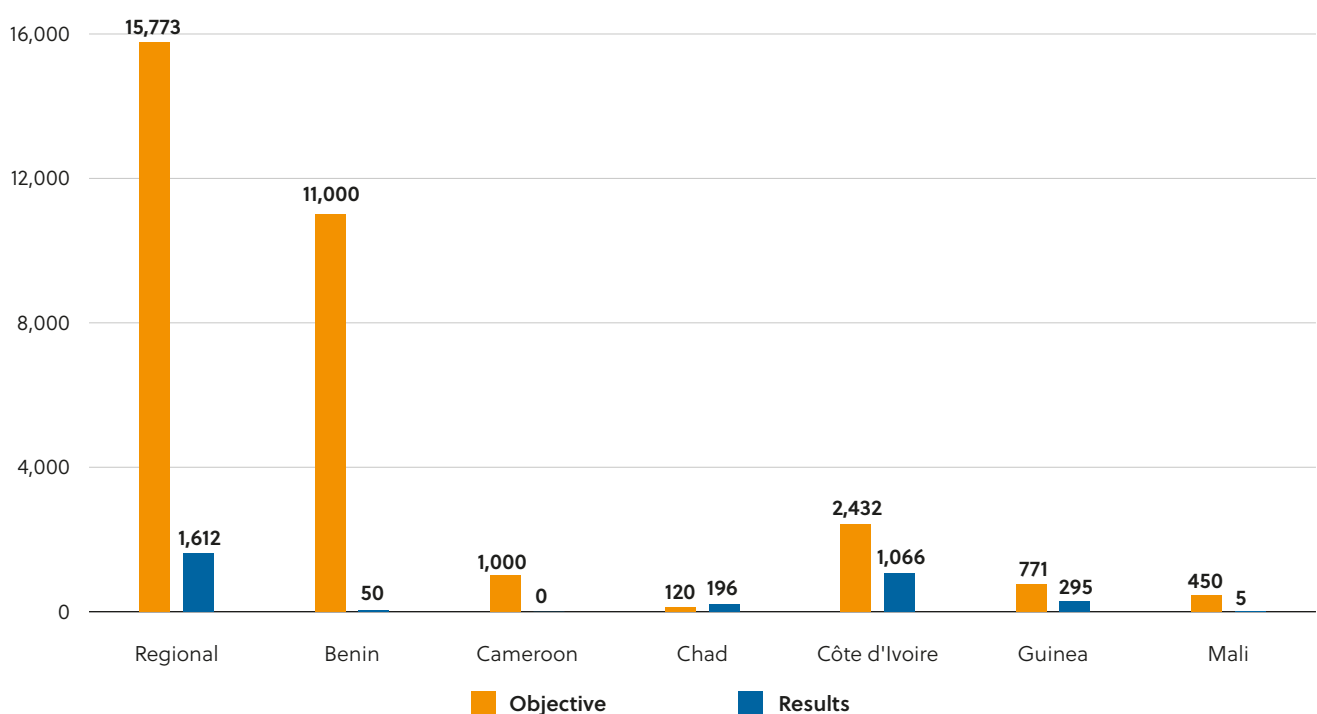
The number of cases of GBV and harmful practices referred for health, social, legal and security care is far from the target. The established process has only dealt with **1,612** cases out of a forecast of **15,773**. The delay in setting up referral and management mechanisms is attributed, among other things, to the weakness of the national systems in place.

In terms of performance by country, **Chad** handled 196 cases out of a forecast of 120, achieving a rate of 163 per cent. **Côte d'Ivoire** handled 1,066 cases out of a forecast of 2,432,

achieving a rate of 44 per cent. **Guinea** handled 295 cases out of a forecast of 771, achieving a rate of 38 per cent. In **Mali**, only five cases were handled out of a forecast of 450, representing an achievement rate of 1 per cent. In **Benin**, only 50 cases were handled out of a forecast of 11,000, also representing an achievement rate of 1 per cent.

This analysis highlights significant differences, both in terms of national aspirations and the ability to implement public policies to combat this violence. Substantial efforts are needed to improve prevention and care for victims in most countries.

**FIGURE 4** Number of cases of GBV and harmful practices: targets and results in 2023



Source: IRI#4

#### 5. Regional level

##### Documentation of intervention processes

In 2023, the SWEDD project made a significant effort to document the processes of 13 key interventions across its three components. This resulted in the development of 13 guides and 13 operational briefs. These documents covered the regional curriculum for safe spaces, husbands' clubs and future husbands' clubs on the economic initiatives for the empowerment of women; Safe Space; and the experiences of husbands' clubs and future husbands' clubs in changing gender norms.

##### Regional mapping of economic opportunities and financial inclusion

The RTS, with the support of Plan International, mapped economic opportunities.<sup>(12)</sup> The report highlights the effectiveness of interventions for the economic empowerment of women and girls, while emphasizing the importance of ongoing awareness-raising, political commitment, collaboration between stakeholders, and the application of laws to create an environment conducive to gender equality. The main results are as follows:

(12) Analysis of Economic Intervention Mapping, 2023.

- Several countries have implemented concrete initiatives, specifically focusing on skills development, mentoring, support for business start-ups, grouping into networks and cooperatives, and awareness-raising and education measures.
- The initiatives have generated many permanent and temporary jobs in various sectors, including agriculture, processing of local products, sewing, hair-dressing and soap-making. This has helped improve women's living conditions and reduce poverty.
- The results indicate that income-generating activities are particularly sustainable.
- The analysis identified success factors, including an inclusive, multi-sectoral approach to programming, integration into jobs traditionally reserved for men, and the building of strategic partnerships.
- Development of the safe spaces terms of reference and targeting plans for Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Mauritania.
- Development of curriculum adaptation plans and train-the-trainers plans for Cameroon and Guinea. In addition, the Population Council has defined and shared the monitoring, evaluation and learning indicators for monitoring activities.
- A mission to support Guinea in effectively managing the planning and implementation of husbands' clubs and Future husbands' clubs programmes on the basis of minimum standards, teaching tools, basic documents, lessons learned and experiences from SWEDD countries.

### **Support for the strengthening of safe spaces, husbands' clubs and future husbands' clubs**

The Population Council and Equimundo have provided support to countries in identifying sites for safe spaces, husbands' clubs and future husbands' clubs, and in bringing safe space activities closer to those of the clubs. In addition, meetings were held to discuss these strategies.

### **Launch of a study on school dropouts**

The study on school dropout highlighted the challenges that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic for girls' access to education. While there is apparent support for girls' education, many obstacles remain, and a holistic and contextualized approach is required. It is crucial to take the major environmental, social and economic factors that influence girls' decision to leave school into account, including poverty, distance from schools and social constraints.



## CHAPTER II

# Strengthening regional capacities and the availability of RMNCNH products and qualified health workers

**This component should make it possible to strengthen regional capacities in terms of supplying the essential elements, including products and qualified personnel needed to provide reproductive, maternal, neonatal, infant and nutritional health services.**

In 2023, the programme management units (PMUs) of the countries concerned, in collaboration with CHMP and the RTS, carried out several key activities to improve the availability of skilled workers as well as maternal, neonatal, child and nutritional health products.

The distribution plans have been updated and monitoring mechanisms put in place for community-based distribution of contraceptives. Countries have been supported in collecting indicators and documenting good practice. Pilot projects to strengthen the supply chain have continued,

and a regional meeting was held to share experiences on last-mile distribution of health care inputs. Technical assistance activities for 2023 were rounded off with an online train-the-trainers course for supply chain stakeholders and a virtual training of trainers course for mentor midwives.

In addition to these regional initiatives, countries have carried out targeted actions to strengthen the skills of health care providers. In Chad, for example, 30 teachers and supervisors were trained in supervisory techniques through a dedicated session, and capacity-building workshops in contraceptive technology were organized to improve the provision of family planning services. Sixty-four health centre managers and midwives were trained during eight-day sessions, enabling them to become familiar with the new concepts and methods.

**TABLE 5 Summary of results achieved in 2023**

Indicator	Basic data	Target	Results
Number of countries with an implementation plan for community-based distribution	0	9	9
Number of supply chain stakeholders trained	0	18	64
Number of trainers trained in mentoring	0	27	56

## 2.1. Improving access to contraceptives at community level

The nine countries were supported in the area of community-based distribution during 2023 with technical support from CHMP. The main activities carried out are summarized in Table 6.

**TABLE 6 Status of contraceptive availability at community level in 2023**

Country	Highlights
Benin	The Contraceptive Procurement Table was updated in consultation with stakeholders at all levels of the health pyramid in the supply chain. This made it possible to identify the needs for the next three years and highlight the difficulties encountered in reporting data.
Burkina Faso	The supply plan was revised at regional stock review workshops held under the auspices of the Family Health Department, which was further consolidated at a national T Contraceptive Procurement Table ACworkshop.
Cameroon	The needs were updated at a working session and projected to 2024.
Chad	The quantification exercise has enabled us to estimate the requirements for the period 2024–2027.
Côte d'Ivoire	The supply plan for sexual and reproductive health and family planning products was drawn up at a quantification workshop. In 2024, various activities will be conducted to finance and implement the plan.
Guinea	In September 2023, a campaign was launched in the Faranah, Kankan and Labé regions to distribute contraceptives free of charge at fixed points. The SWEDD project provided financial support.
Mali	A support system was established for the Pharmacy and Medicines Department by holding quantification meetings and supervising stakeholders to ensure the availability of community-based distribution inputs.
Mauritania	A working group was established to monitor the availability of reproductive health and family planning products. They hold quantification reviews and ensure formative supervision.
Niger	Distribution plans for 2023–2025 were updated at a quantification update workshop organized by the Family Planning Department.

CHMP produced a prototype for the community-based distribution monitoring platform. It enables:

Improved management of campaign data.

- Compatibility and harmony with existing schemes.
- Adaptation to national needs.
- Stock traceability.
- Collection of essential indicators throughout the supply chain.
- Proactive stock management.
- Facilitation of operations.
- Monitoring of results.

The documentation of best practice was completed with the drafting of four guides: three CHMP guides and one WHO guide. A brief for decision makers accompanied each guide.

### New users of a modern contraceptive method

Between 2021 and 2023, the main results achieved led to the greater availability of contraceptive products and an increase in the number of new users of modern contraceptive methods in these countries.

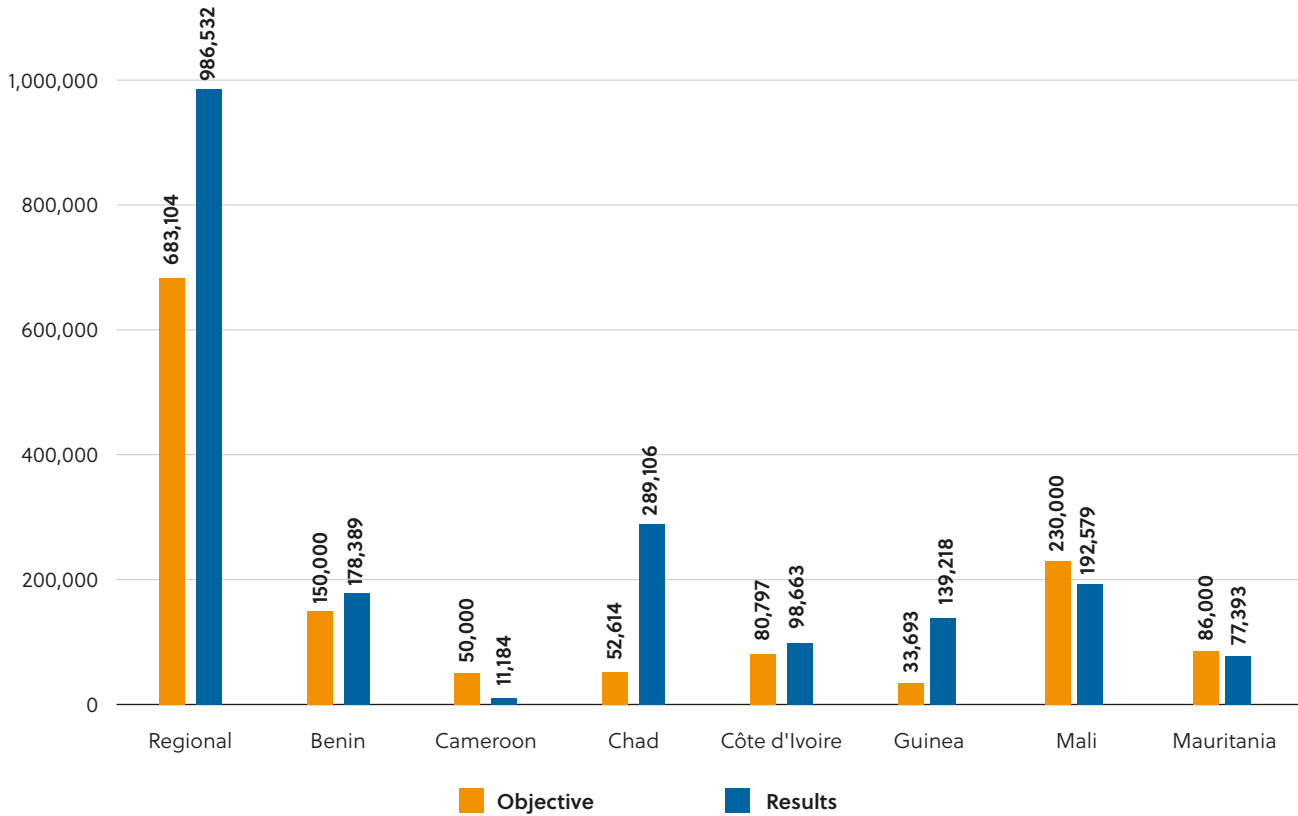
The regional target of 702,147 new users by 2023 was surpassed by the result of 986,532, or 142 per cent of the cumulative target between 2015 and 2023 (Figure 8). This indicates that the forecasts were significantly exceeded. Additionally, it is noteworthy that this indicator exceeded the end-of-project target in 2024 by 215,799, which is 22 per cent more than forecast.

Chad exceeded its target with 289,106 new users compared with a target of 52,614, which represents an achievement rate of 549 per cent.

The number of new users of modern contraceptive methods by country, categorized by target and result achieved, indicates that most countries have made significant progress in increasing women's access to modern contraception.

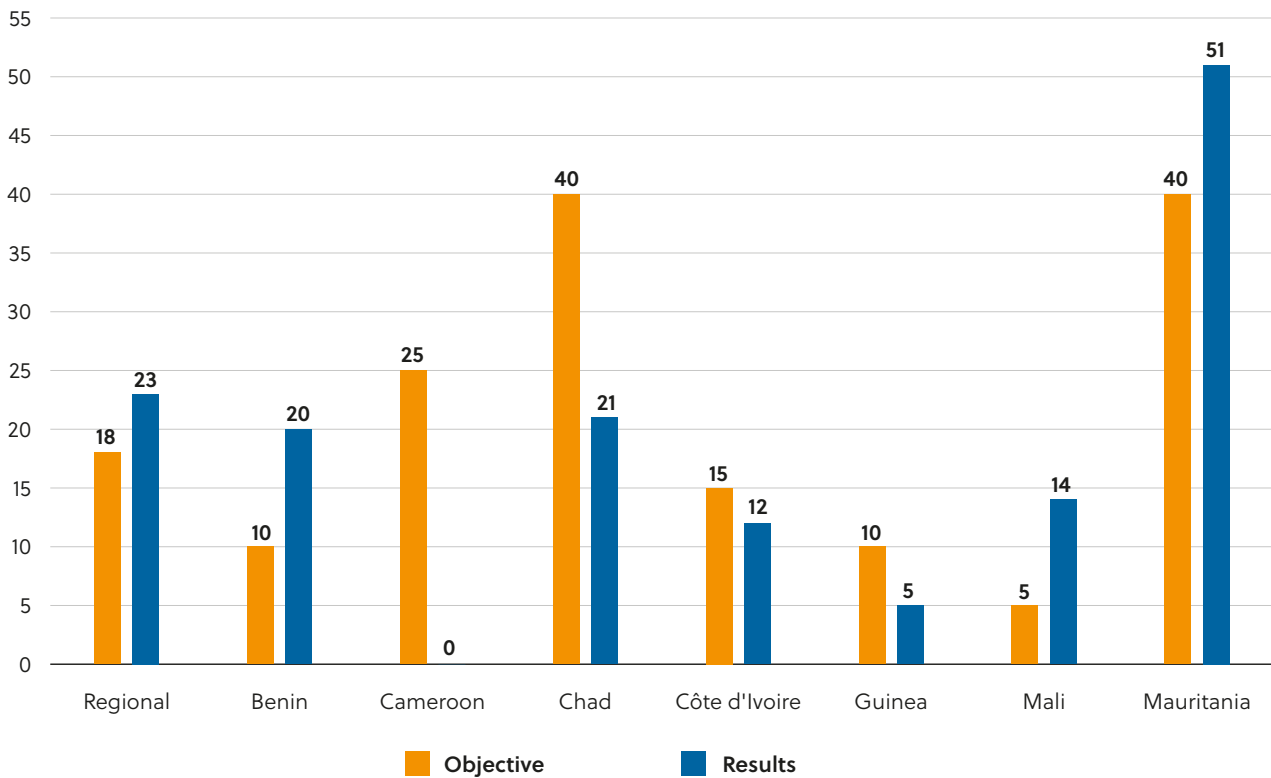


**FIGURE 5** Number of new users of a modern contraceptive method by country according to the target and the result achieved in 2023



Source: IODP#3

**FIGURE 6** Breakage rate of contraceptive products at service delivery points in project intervention zones



Source: IODP#4

### Contraceptive product rupture rate

Figure 9 shows the breakage rates for contraceptive products at service delivery points in seven countries and at the regional level. These countries include Guinea, which had an excellent rate of 5 per cent against a target of 10 per cent, and Chad.

Three countries, namely Benin, Mali and Mauritania, have not achieved the target and have higher than expected breakage rates. Mauritania has the most worrying rate at 51 per cent against a target of 40 per cent. Conversely,

four countries have seen an improvement. However, at the regional level, the breakthrough rate is 23 per cent compared with the initial target of 18 per cent.

Although progress has been made in several countries, disparities remain and are having a negative impact on the regional rate. Efforts still need to be made to improve the availability of contraceptive products in certain countries and reduce stock-outs. To identify the causes of this mixed performance, a more in-depth analysis by country would be necessary.

## 2.2. Improving the performance of the pharmaceutical supply chain, last-mile distribution

The CHMP, with the support of the RTS, supported activities to strengthen the supply chain to ensure last-mile distribution of RMNCNH inputs. The countries continued to implement pilot projects to compare strictly public models with models based on partnership between the public and private sectors. Models have been tested in five countries, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger. Two other countries, Benin and Mauritania, have started implementing pilots.

The regional meeting provided an opportunity to share the experiences of the seven countries that have implemented last-mile distribution pilot projects. The meeting highlighted their difficulties, lessons learned and good practices.

The meeting provided an opportunity to refine the various strategies and identify potential solutions to the challenges

encountered. More than 60 heads of procurement departments from ministries of health identified five best practices that were validated by all the countries present. These best practices were shared with all the countries for their 2024 planning.

### Dissemination of the RMNCNH product management application

The CHMP developed a computer application to improve the system for monitoring the community-based distribution of contraceptive products and the deployment of the community-based distribution system in nine countries. This application alerts management of stocks of RMNCNH products. The RTS has supported the dissemination of this tool through virtual meetings with all the country coordination units (CCUs).



### 2.3. Improving the availability of reproductive health workers in rural areas and strengthening the role of midwives and other staff involved in the provision of RMNCNH services

The CHMP, with the technical support of the RTS, carried out three major activities in 2023:

- Training trainers in supply and stock management.
- Training midwife trainers in clinical mentoring.
- Carrying out a study on the added value of the CoEs supported by SWEDD.

#### Train-the-trainers on supply and stock management

Three online training sessions for supply and stock management trainers were organized from 18 to 22 December 2023 in collaboration with the nine PMUs and CCUs in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Eight participants per country attended each session. The aim was to provide the countries with human resources who are qualified in RMNCNH. The training sessions equipped 73 supply chain managers from the SWEDD countries with proven skills to better manage RMNCNH products.

#### Training midwife trainers in clinical mentoring

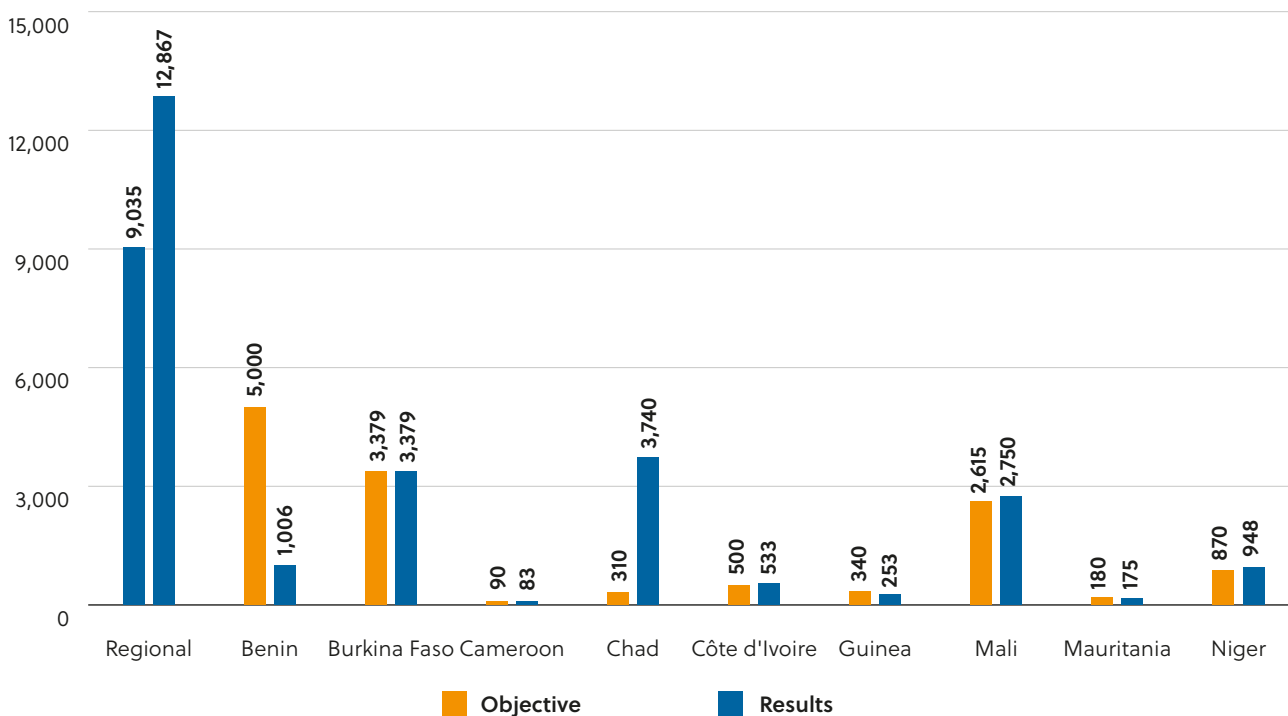
In collaboration with national midwifery associations and ministries of health, the skills of 63 midwife mentors have been enhanced in terms of virtual clinical mentoring (e-learning).

The number of midwives trained in the region was 12,867, which was 142 per cent of the regional target of 9,035. Benin and Mauritania were the only countries that did not exceed their national targets.

Chad exceeded its target the most, with 3,740 midwives trained compared to the initial plan of 310, which represents an achievement rate of 1,207 per cent. Burkina Faso achieved its target perfectly with 100 per cent completion.

These results show that significant progress has been made in building the capacity of midwives through these additional short courses, which focus on improving quality.

FIGURE 7 Number of midwives in intervention zones having completed their training in 2023



Source: IRI#6

### Main results of the study on the added value of CoEs

According to surveys<sup>(13)</sup>, the basic profile of CoE beneficiaries is as follows: 48 per cent nurses, 35 per cent midwives and 17 per cent others, including medical biologists, microbiologists, physiotherapists, anaesthetists and senior technicians.

The total number of beneficiaries to date for the three training cohorts at the Abidjan and Niamey CoEs is 170 (83 for Abidjan and 87 for Niamey). The Abidjan CoE has 70 graduates and 13 learners, while the Niamey CoE has 68 graduates and 19 learners. It is worth noting that almost two-thirds of the training beneficiaries come from the countries hosting the CoEs, namely Côte d'Ivoire (39), Mali (38), and Niger (33). The remaining SWEDD countries are distributed as follows: Benin (6), Burkina Faso (13), Mauritania (17) and Chad (25).

In terms of material conditions, equipment and infrastructure, and quality of training, 66.7 per cent of learners and 47.4 per cent of graduates in Abidjan reported being satisfied. In Niamey, 30.8 per cent of learners and 70.9 per cent of graduates reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the material conditions, equipment and infrastructure.

All respondents at the Abidjan CoE expressed satisfaction with the quality of the training programme (100 per cent). At the Niamey CoE, 92.3 per cent of learners and 87 per cent of graduates reported being satisfied.

In terms of the added value and career path of graduates, the survey revealed that 63.2 per cent of graduates from the Abidjan CoE obtained a new job or a new position at the end of their training; 31.6 per cent remained in the same position; and 5.3 per cent were unemployed at the time of the survey. The figures for Niamey were 74.2 per cent, 22.6 per cent and 3.2 per cent, respectively.

The vast majority of graduates in Abidjan (95 per cent) and all of those in Niamey (100 per cent) working in RMNCNH's supply structures reported adding value. When asked whether the training provided by the CoEs enabled them to practise their profession easily, the results were more than satisfactory: 94.7 per cent for Abidjan and 96.8 per cent for Niamey.

It is worth noting that 84.3 per cent of graduates worked within the SWEDD project area, with 85.7 per cent of midwives and 81.8 per cent of nurses. In addition to the profiles mentioned, the basic profiles followed the same trend with 87.7 per cent working in one of the project areas. The study also showed that this trend was maintained in the other SWEDD countries, with the exception of Mauritania.

### Material conditions, equipment, infrastructure and quality of training

At the Abidjan CoE, 66.7 per cent of learners and 47.4 per cent of graduates said they were satisfied. However, this was not the case at the Niamey CoE, where only 30.8 per cent of learners and 70.9 per cent of graduates reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the material conditions, equipment and infrastructure. At the Abidjan CoE, all respondents appreciated the quality of the training programme, while at the Niamey CoE, 92.3 per cent of learners and 87 per cent of graduates reported the same.

### Added value and career paths of graduates

More than three out of five graduates (63.2 per cent) from the Abidjan CoE obtained a new position or a new job at the end of their training. At the time of the survey, almost a third (31.6 per cent) were in the same job position and 5.3 per cent were unemployed. Graduates from the Abidjan and Niamey CoEs who worked in RMNCNH's supply structures claimed that they added value to 95 per cent and 100 per cent of their work, respectively.

### Place of work of graduates from CoEs

Of graduates, 84.3 per cent work in one of the SWEDD project areas, including 85.7 per cent of midwives and 81.8 per cent of nurses.

### Regulatory framework and monitoring system

The countries stated that they do not have a regulatory framework for the official recognition of the training programme provided within the partnership with the SWEDD project. Nevertheless, those in charge of training at the Abidjan and Niamey CoEs indicated that there is a system in place to monitor the quality of their master's training.

(13) Study on the Added Value of SWEDD Centres of Excellence, 2023.



## CHAPTER III

# Strengthening advocacy and political commitment to the RMNCNH at regional and national levels

Component 3 aims to strengthen (i) advocacy and political commitment in favour of the RMNCNH by leveraging the networks of religious, traditional, communicators and young people; (ii) the capacity for policy development, monitoring and evaluation of demographic dividend issues; and (iii) the capacity for project implementation.

### 3.1. Strengthening advocacy and political commitment to the RMNCNH at regional and national level

#### 1. Involvement of religious leaders at regional level

The monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations of the regional workshop for the involvement of religious leaders in the SWEDD project was very encouraging in 2023. This has resulted in several positive outcomes.

- **In Burkina Faso:** Certain mosques have introduced marriage registers and increased the marriageable age for young girls.
- **In Côte d'Ivoire:** Stereotypes and habits and customs that do not encourage the empowerment of women and girls and develop parent-child communication have been deconstructed.
- **In Mauritania:** There has been greater community support for girls' schooling and an increase in the age of first marriage, helping to space births and empower women.
- **In Niger:** (i) Public acceptance of sensitive issues relating to gender and the demographic dividend in a heavily Islamic country; (ii) customary and traditional leaders banning home births and child marriages; and (iii) customary and traditional leaders encouraging girls to return to school and enrol in apprenticeships.

### 2. Setting up legal platforms and developing harmonized, budgeted action plans for country legal teams

The RTS, supported by the Centre for African Family Studies in Population, Health and Sustainable Development, convened all the legal teams from across the country and pan-African institutions to take stock of the implemented activities, foster exchange and sharing of experiences among platform members, and finalize the integration of subregional institutions. At the end of the meeting, the following results were achieved:

- An assessment of country legal team activities by country has been drawn up and circulated to all stakeholders.
- Promising practices for compiling and disseminating legal texts have been identified.
- Legal frameworks in countries relating to the empowerment of women were shared.
- The capacities of the members of the country legal team have been strengthened with regard to African mechanisms for the prevention and protection of human rights.
- Recommendations and next steps have been identified to accelerate action.

As part of the process of improving the legal framework in line with the project's themes, the regional platform of lawyers and the legal teams in the countries have been working on finalizing their action plans.

### 3. Involvement of members of parliament

The RTS, with the support of the Centre for African Family Studies, took stock of national parliamentary networks on population and development in nine countries.

#### Elaboration of adopted action plans

In the process of elaborating the action plans of the Network of Parliamentarians on Population and Devel-

opment, workshops were organized in Benin and Burkina Faso to support the interventions of the SWEDD project at national level. Parliamentarians of Benin and Burkina Faso – members of the Network of Parliamentarians on Population and Development – adopted action plans in line with the proposed strategic axes.

#### The creation of the Network of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in Mauritania has begun

Discussions were held with the Commission de l'Orientation Islamique, des Ressources Humaines, de la Culture et des Affaires Sociales<sup>(14)</sup>. This is the commission in Mauritania that, in the configuration of the new National Assembly, is responsible for population and development issues and, therefore, for empowering women and capturing the demographic dividend.

The discussions resulted in the creation of a core group of parliamentarians dedicated to population issues. This group is particularly focused on lobbying to initiate or promote legislation that empowers women and captures the demographic dividend. The core group will replace the Parliamentary Group, since the name is no longer being used in the Mauritanian Parliament.

#### Availability of the road map for the Regional Parliamentary Advocacy Network

The RTS has supported the Centre for African Family Studies to develop a road map that will be validated at the next regional meeting of parliamentarians. It takes the main global strategic frameworks into account, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Vision 2063: The Africa We Want. This is a contribution to the operationalization of the African Union road map on *Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth* and the commitments made by parliamentarians at various conferences on population and development issues.

## 3.2 Building capacity to develop policies for monitoring and evaluating demographic dividend issues

### Support for Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Niger in BSDD

The Centre de Recherche en Économie Générationnelle (CREG)<sup>(15)</sup> supported seven countries in the retroactive calculation of the Demographic Dividend Tracking Index

(DDMI) over a period of approximately 20 years, depending on the availability of data in the countries. The process of backcasting and linking the DDMI of countries involved two steps. First, the DDMI for distant points for which survey data was available was calibrated. Second, the DDMI for the years between two consecutive surveys were connected

(14) Commission for Islamic Orientation, Human Resources, Culture, and Social Affairs.

(15) Regional Consortium for Generational Economics Research.



or estimated. For example, the process was used for Benin over the periods 2004–2010 and 2012–2018. This provided a continuous series over the period 2003–2020. It is important to note that most countries had at least two DDMI points. This exercise is a crucial step in developing a budgeting tool for the demographic dividend.

Cameroon, Chad, Guinea and Mauritania received support to implement the first two stages of the BSDD process. These stages include backcasting the DDMI over a period of approximately 20 years and transforming the traditional budget into a functional budget.

**Cameroon:** The workshop to build capacity and calibrate the DDMI began successfully in the third quarter with support from the regional level. The first phase of the workshop took place online from 21 to 26 September 2023. National stakeholders in the production and updating of the DDMI and the Gender Demographic Dividend Index were trained. Twelve national experts from the public administration attended this training, including representatives from the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT), National Institute of Statistics (INS), Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC), Institut de Formation et de Recherche Démographiques (IFORD, Institute of Training and Demographic Research), and Bureau Central des Recensements et des Études de Population (BUCREP, Central Bureau of Census and Population Studies). They benefited from the experience of the CREG team in calibrating the DDMI.

**Chad:** A workshop was held in Thiès, Senegal, from 10 to 17 July 2023 to transform the traditional budget of Chad into

a functional budget. The aim was to provide quality assurance on the transformation and backcasting carried out by national experts. It was attended by five Chadian experts supported by CREG experts. The experts produced an analysis report on backcasting at the end of the workshop. The workshop's main recommendations were focused on continuing the BSDD process, specifically backcasting and linking, as well as calculating budget elasticities.

**Guinea:** The regional level supported Guinea in finalizing the National Transfer Account (NTA) and National Time Transfer Account reports. The Direction National Population et du Développement<sup>(16)</sup> was assisted through a workshop that brought together national experts in Kindia. Eighteen Guinean experts and department heads participated in this activity.

The main recommendation from the workshop was that the reports should be validated, edited and published, and the results disseminated.

**Mauritania:** A workshop was held from 14 to 19 August 2023 to finalize the NTA, DDMI, as well as BSDD reports for Mauritania. Seventeen Mauritanian experts participated in the finalization of the NTA and DDMI analysis reports, the calibration of the macrobudgetary model of the demographic dividend and the estimation of the budgetary elasticities of the DDMI functions. The main recommendations from the workshop were that Mauritania should operationalize the Demographic Dividend National Observatory (DDNO), consider research collaboration with the CREG and produce policy summaries for distribution to the authorities.

<sup>(16)</sup> National Directorate of Population and Development.

### 3.3 Monitoring, evaluation and research

#### Regional capacity-building workshop on monitoring and evaluation of social and behaviour change communication activities

- A regional workshop was organized to bring communication officers and monitoring and evaluation managers from the PMUs of the nine countries together. The purpose of the workshop was to harmonize knowledge on approaches, tools, and monitoring and evaluation indicators in relation to SBCC and the project's strategic community interventions, particularly at the safe spaces level. This workshop was carried out by the John Hopkins University in collaboration with the RTS and with the participation of the World Bank. It was also an opportunity to finalize the data-collection plans for the project's impact indicators. The RTS drew up an action plan to follow up on the recommendations made at the workshop, and concrete steps are currently being implemented:
- Identify the indicators collected by certain household surveys (such as the Demographic and Health Surveys and the Performance Monitoring for Action survey) and ensure that they are representative of the intervention zones.
- Establish good collaboration between national statistical institutes – DDNOs and coordination and management units – in the process of conducting surveys.
- Extend and adapt the proposed monitoring and measurement tools to other SBCC themes (not family planning) for which indicators have not yet been consensually established.
- Organize one or more virtual sessions to validate and consolidate the list of regional indicators on SBCC activities.
- Share data-collection tools covering the validated list of indicators.

#### Regional study on economic and social transformations in life

The general objective of this study is to identify and understand the economic and social transformations that have affected the beneficiaries of the interventions in the first six countries of the SWEDD project, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania and Niger between 2015 and 2020.

This study aims to describe the life experiences of the beneficiaries over the course of their participation in SWEDD activities. It will further document the perspectives of the beneficiaries, project managers and resource persons. The study aims to understand how participation in SWEDD project activities could have influenced the life

experiences of the participating adolescent girls and young women without evoking a direct cause–effect attribution. The methodological and data-collection tools were developed at a regional workshop.

#### Qualitative study: Documentation of implementation processes and key lessons learned

During 2023, it was important to document the processes of conceptualization, implementation and monitoring-evaluation-learning of the 13 key interventions of the SWEDD project through the three components described above. The motivation for writing this documentation is because SWEDD has become a strategic framework in the region for dealing with sensitive issues. Rigorous documentation of processes raises questions that are different from those of evaluations that examine results. It asks questions about how an intervention was conceptualized and implemented, with which stakeholders, and what the experiences of implementation and monitoring-evaluation were.

The 13 themes chosen by the PMUs include, among others: the development of the regional curriculum for safe spaces; the implementation of safe spaces and schools for mothers-to-be and schools for future mothers; economic initiatives for women's empowerment; community distribution of last-mile contraceptives; and DDNOs.

The PMUs suggested key respondents to be interviewed based on their involvement in the conceptualization, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of a theme. The technical partners, including the Population Council, Equimundo, John Hopkins University, Plan International, CHMP, WAHO and CREG, used a common conversation guide, modified for each theme, to collect information from the respondents with technical support from the RTS and the World Bank. This information was combined with project documents provided by the PMUs for the final analysis. Thirteen good practice guides and operational briefs were validated by the PMUs.

#### The challenges most frequently noted when documenting intervention processes

Cumbersome administrative procedures and other problems, including lack of transport and delays in the availability of products (contraceptive products for Component 2 and school support kits for Component 1, for example):

- A monitoring and evaluation system that is often weak, and there is no opportunity for systematic learning almost everywhere.
- A lack of systematic communication and advocacy.



**For Component 1:** It is important to (i) have sufficient budget and time to invest in curriculum development and the selection of group leaders; (ii) ensure a continued focus on the empowerment of girls and young women through safe spaces, husbands' clubs and future husbands' clubs; (iii) systematically engage religious and community leaders as allies for gender equality; and (iv) create opportunities for women's economic empowerment in male domains, but in a way that does not put them at risk due to social norms.

**For Component 2:** The guides produced from this documentation describe (i) how to better engage and retain midwives, especially for remote areas where it remains a major challenge; (ii) how to roll out technical support to improve the quality of national laboratories; and (iii) how to avoid problems in the rural pipeline and ensure that RMNCNH products and services are accessible to the most remote adolescent girls and young women.

**For Component 3:** The documentation of the processes highlighted the lack of transfer of skills to the DDNOs so that they can carry out this research and advocacy, the need to strengthen partnerships, and the urgent need to invest in a communication plan.

The guides and briefs provide key lessons and other information that will be used to integrate forward-looking process documentation as part of the supervision and monitoring of interventions in SWEDD+. This will facilitate immediate learning for the implementation of interventions.

#### **Capacity-building for DDNO experts in geospatial analysis and data visualization**

In collaboration with the UNFPA regional office for West and Central Africa, the RTS supported the preparation and hosting of a capacity-building workshop for national statistical institutes and DDNOs in geospatial analysis and data visualization in Lomé from 7 to 11 August 2023. The workshop was attended by 13 experts from DDNOs in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania and Togo.

By the end of the workshop, the experts had mastered analysing infrastructure accessibility, such as schools and health centres, and had created dashboards.

The RTS supported capacity-building for the national statistical institutes and DDNOs on population projections in collaboration with the UNFPA regional office for West and Central Africa and the Economic Community for Africa. The workshop was attended by experts from the DDNOs of six SWEDD countries, namely Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger and Togo. At the end of the training workshop, the experts' abilities to produce demographic projections at national and local levels improved. In the context of the SWEDD project, it is possible to project



specific demographic parameters, including population size, fertility, mortality and migration, in small areas.

In addition to this workshop, the RTS organized two online workshops in collaboration with CREG in Thiès. The first

online workshop was on joining the NTA network, and the second online workshop on time use methodology. The countries recommended organizing such surveys, which are crucial for measuring gender inequalities in the division of labour and in the economy.

### 3.4. Results framework<sup>(17)</sup> regional adapted to project developments

In 2023, the SWEDD results framework showed significant progress, although this progress was uneven across different components, countries and specific indicators. Projections for 2024 indicate a positive trajectory for most of the key indicators.

**Component 1**, which focuses on empowering women, performed well on several indicators. The school retention rate for girls (**IODP#1**) has reached a regional average of **96 per cent**, exceeding the target of **79 per cent**. It has already reached the end-of-project target of **93 per cent** by 2024. The percentage of safe space beneficiaries with

good knowledge of the consequences of early marriage and pregnancy (**IODP#2**) is **95 per cent**, against a target of **88 per cent**, having already reached the end-of-project target of **87 per cent** for 2024. In 2023, **682,118** adolescent girls (**IRI#1**) benefited from school enrolment interventions, representing **63 per cent** progress towards the 2024 target of **1,083,347**. Safe spaces (**IRI#2**) are progressing well with **449,675** beneficiaries, which constitutes 83 per cent of the 2024 target of **541,859** beneficiaries. Economic support for women (**IRI#3**) is progressing slowly, with **147,638** beneficiaries, which is **67 per cent** of the end-of-project target of **219,717** in 2024. GBV (**IRI#4**) is being reduced significantly. The regional result of **1,612** cases referred in 2023 was well below the target of **15,773**, indicating a reduction in cases of GBV and harmful practices in the project's intervention zones. However, we also noted a low number of referrals for health, social, legal and safety care, according to the referral process in place. It is important to note that the end-of-project target for 2024 is **20,187** cases referred.



**Component 2**, dedicated to reproductive health, has achieved excellent results, particularly in terms of the number of new users of modern contraceptives (**IODP#3**), which reached **1,005,710** against a target of **702,147**, i.e. 91 per cent of the end-of-project target of **1,100,647** in 2024. In addition, 13 last-mile distribution pilot projects (**IRI#5**) were carried out in 2023, exceeding the target of 12, i.e. 42 per cent progress compared with the end-of-project target of 31 in 2024. However, the stock-out rate (**IODP#4**) in 2023 was 23 per cent with a target of 18 per cent, the end-of-project target being 12 per cent in 2024. The training of midwives (**IRI#6**) is producing remarkable results, which are far exceeding expectations. While the initial objective was to train **9,035** midwives, **12,867** professionals benefited from training, which is an impressive achievement of **142 per cent** compared with the target. This performance bears witness to the project's commitment to strengthening the skills of maternal and neonatal health

<sup>(17)</sup> The performance framework for the indicators (IODP and IRI) can be found in Appendix 1 for reference.

care staff, particularly in rural areas. With **95 per cent** of the end-of-project objective of training **13,557** midwives by 2024 already achieved, the project is well on track to meet and even exceed this ambitious target. This high-quality training will lead to lasting improvements in the quality of care and will save lives, thereby helping to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality in the target regions.

**Component 3**, on political commitment, shows mixed progress but ambitious targets for 2024. Only a few countries adopted demographic dividend budgeting (**IODP#5**) in 2023, but all nine countries should have done so by 2024. Similarly, the number of legal frameworks that are favourable to women's rights (**IODP#6**) should increase from 20 to 29. Significant progress should be seen in observatories on the demographic dividend (**IRI#7**), dedicated publications (**IRI#8**), and the commitment of community and religious leaders (**IRI#9**). However, the percentage of complaints

handled (**IRI#10**) is 95 per cent and is expected to reach 96 per cent by 2024. There is a complaints management system in the project's areas of intervention, which makes it possible to detect, refer and manage cases of GBV.

**The lessons learned include** the significance of adapting interventions to national contexts, enhancing indicator monitoring systems, increasing advocacy with decision makers and exchanging good practice between countries.

The project is showing **positive momentum** overall, and **the 2024 projections confirm** that the trend towards achieving the SWEDD objectives is continuing. However, **sustained efforts** are still needed, particularly in terms of empowering women and political commitment, to fully realize the transformational potential of the project for the benefit of women and girls.

### 3.5. Capacity-building for project implementation

This section covers the activities of the RTS for strategic management of the SWEDD project. It also highlights the support provided to countries in the preparation of their PADs and complementary documents for the SWEDD+ phase.

#### Support for countries

**Cameroon:** The PMU and the country office met to discuss implementing technical assistance for project start-up.

**Gambia:** A technical assistance workshop was held in Banjul from 15 to 18 March 2023 to revise all the technical documents to be submitted to the World Bank for approval. The relevant sectoral ministries, the UNFPA country office and the World Bank were present. At the end of the mission, the following next steps were formulated:

- Consolidate the three PAD components and the practical guidelines for finalizing the mini-PAD.
- Revise and validate the results framework.
- Examine the four technical documents, including two documents on social and instrumental safeguards and the terms of reference for two background studies, and make recommendations.
- Share good practice regarding the subproject operational framework and Senegal mini-PAD.

**Guinea:** The regional technical assistance request was analysed, and the PMU and country office were consulted to clarify requests. Thematic working teams, including the PMU, sector ministries, UNFPA country and regional offices, were set up and a follow-up meeting was scheduled every two weeks.

**Senegal:** The RTS supported the country office in finalizing the mini-PAD by working with the national team. This involved checking the consistency of the results framework.

#### Development of environmental and social safeguarding instruments

In preparation for SWEDD+, environmental and social safeguards instruments were developed. These instruments consist of two main documents: the Stakeholder Mobilization Plan and the Manpower Management Plan. The RTS collaborated closely with WAHO and ECOWAS to make the first versions of both documents available in the first quarter.

# FINANCIAL REVIEW



In 2023, UNFPA spent **USD 5,815,550.00** out of a planned amount of **USD 6,224,044.72**, resulting in an implementation rate of **93%**. Table 7 displays the financial implementation of the resources spent compared to the resources planned for 2023.

**TABLE 7 Resources spent versus resources planned in 2023 (WAH01 and BNA01)**

Funds	Actual programmatic budget (USD)	Amount spent (USD)	Implementation rate (USD)
WAH01 (Regional Office)	4,060,194.23	3,842,877.66	95%
BNA01 (West and Central African Regional Office)	2,163,850.49	1,972,672.34	91%
	<b>6,224,044.72</b>	<b>5,815,550.00</b>	<b>93%</b>

Source: RTS – SWEDD

Table 8 shows the expenditure in USD per component under the two funds code, WAH01 and BNA01.

**TABLE 8 Breakdown of amounts by fund code**

Description of the cost centre	WAH01 B			BNA01 B		
	Actual programmatic budget	Amounts spent	Implementation rate	Actual programmatic budget	Amounts spent	Implementation rate
Regional Office/West and Central African Region	2,731,763.58	2,578,259.60	94%			
Burkina Faso – Ouagadougou	62,560.57	59,953.32	96%			
Cameroon – Yaoundé	208,737.41	199,304.49	95%			
Chad – N’Djamena	144,721.75	144,721.75	100%			
Côte d’Ivoire – Abidjan	229,240.43	207,669.58	91%			
Guinea – Conakry	159,030.65	157,205.99	99%			
Mali – Bamako	199,253.99	199,253.99	100%			
Mauritania – Nouakchott	211,291.88	211,291.88	100%			
Niger – Niamey	113,593.97	85,217.06	75%			
Regional Office/West and Central African Region				902,959.54	792,484.05	88%
Benin – Cotonou				1,260,890.95	1,180,188.29	94%
	<b>3,842,877.66</b>		<b>95%</b>	<b>2,163,850.49</b>	<b>1,972,672.34</b>	<b>91%</b>
	<b>5,815,550.00</b>		<b>93%</b>			

Source: RTS – SWEDD

Figure 11 shows the actual programme budget and the amounts spent. However, WAH01 has an actual programme budget of USD 4,060,194.23 while BNA01 B has a budget of USD 2,163,850.49. In 2023, both funding sources have made good use of the budgeted funds.

**FIGURE 8 Actual programme budget and amount spent in 2023**

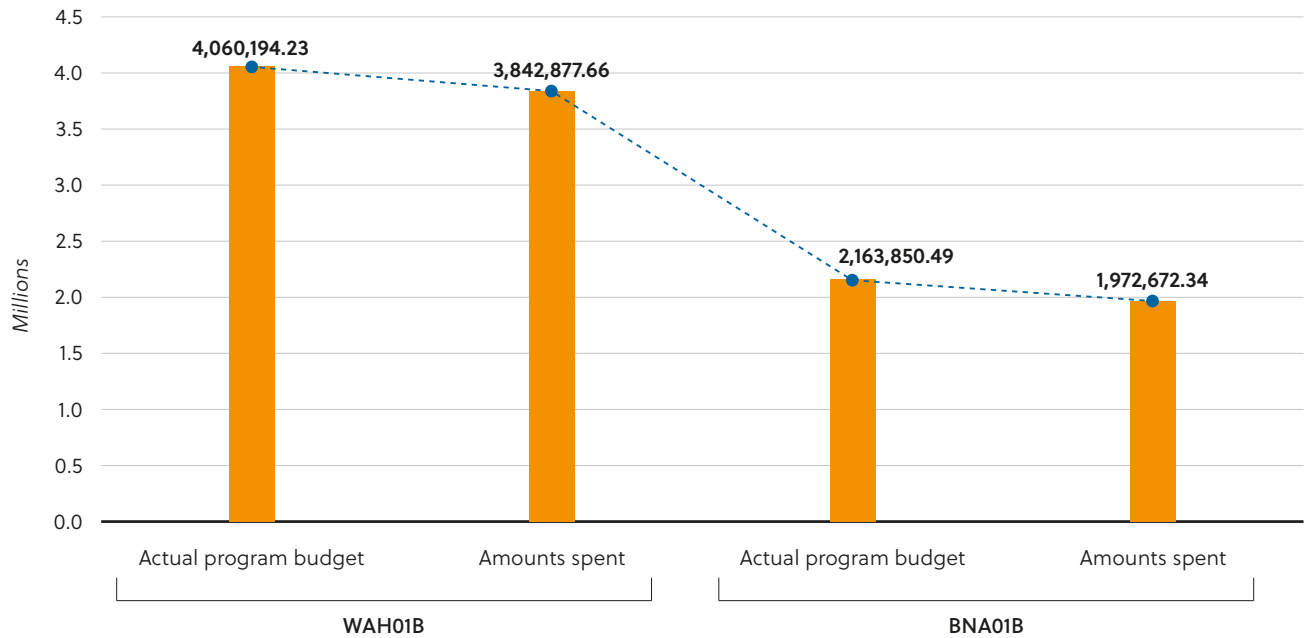
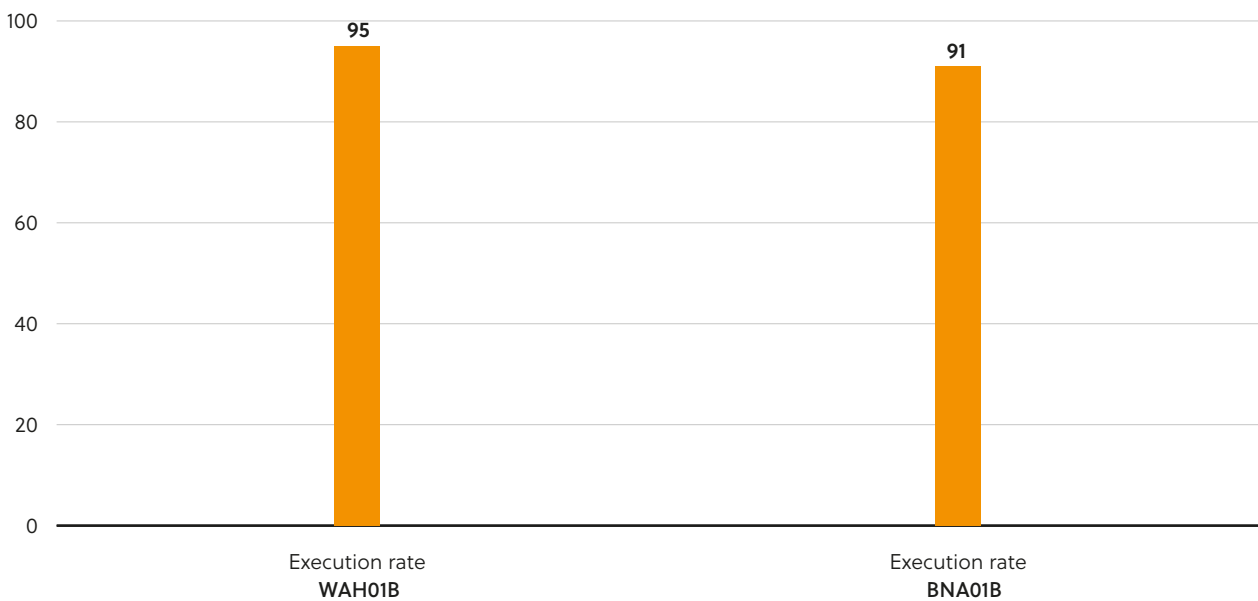


Figure 12 shows the overall implementation rate of the UNFPA budget for 2023, which is 93%. The budget execution rate for WAH01 is 95%, whereas the budget execution rate for BNA01 is 91%.

**FIGURE 9 UNFPA budget execution rate in 2023 (%)**



# CONSTRAINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following constraints and recommendations have been formulated through the implementation of the SWEDD programme activities.

## CONSTRAINTS

- Political and security instability in a number of countries limits access to intervention areas.
- Weak health systems hamper the implementation of capacity-building activities.
- Ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic create delays in the deployment of certain activities.
- Logistical and administrative difficulties in disbursing funds within the required time frame.
- Persistent sociocultural resistance to the empowerment of women and girls.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increasing the flexibility of our actions to adapt to changing contexts linked to security and political crises.
- Supporting national health authorities to improve the availability of qualified human resources.
- Maintaining alternative implementation mechanisms in the event of new epidemic waves.
- Optimizing financial procedures and speeding up the disbursement of funds to countries.
- Innovating and strengthening community-based initiatives to bring about social and behavioural change.
- Strengthening strategies to combat violence against women.
- Expanding partnerships with traditional and religious leaders who play a key role in transforming social norms.
- Strengthening data-collection and reporting capacities in the countries to improve indicator monitoring.
- Capitalizing on and disseminating good practice more widely between SWEDD countries to replicate successful experiences.
- Maintaining regular dialogue between the countries and the technical and financial partners to quickly identify and respond to any difficulties.

# PRIORITIES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE 2024

## **To improve regional demand for health services and empower women and adolescent girls:**

- Develop strategies to transform social norms that discriminate against women and girls.
- Strengthen strategies to combat violence against women.
- Develop a communication campaign for social and behavioural change for 2024.
- Conduct a study to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the training curricula used in community initiatives (both in and out of school) aimed at empowering women and girls.
- Strengthen partnerships with religious and community leaders.
- Provide support for women's economic opportunities and financial empowerment.
- Ensure the mapping and geo-referenced monitoring of empowerment initiatives.

## **To strengthen regional capacities and the availability of RMNCNH products and qualified health workers:**

- Evaluate the operation of community-based distribution of contraceptives.
- Ensure regional collaboration on the availability and deployment of midwives.
- Train mentor midwives and introduce telemedicine.
- Strengthen mentor training and introduce telemedicine.
- Provide support to new countries for last-mile distribution pilot projects.
- Review the implementation strategies for last-mile distribution pilot projects.
- Ensure regional collaboration on human resources in reproductive health.

## **To foster commitment and capacity for policy development and project implementation:**

- Deploy local technical assistance via UNFPA country offices: joint workplans.
- Support budgeting that is sensitive to the demographic dividend.
- Revitalize the DDNOs.
- Facilitate the operation of the population and development networks and the lawyer platform.
- Support advocacy and policy dialogue using research and analysis data.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems, with a particular focus on results-based management and impact.
- Develop an integrated monitoring and evaluation system (dashboard) at regional level.
- Organize an annual SWEDD symposium to share experiences and innovative practices.
- Finalize and roll out the SWEDD Connect knowledge-sharing platform.
- Organize regular SWEDD Connect webinars to share experiences.





# CONCLUSION

The year 2023 was a significant milestone in the efforts of the SWEDD project to empower women and reduce gender inequality. This progress paved the way for the SWEDD+ era.

The three components of the project enabled substantial progress during the year, despite the challenges posed by difficult contexts in some countries. Component 1 on communication, social mobilization and the empowerment of women finalized the national communication strategies in many countries. Component 2 on reproductive health far exceeded its objectives. Component 3 laid the foundation for capacity-building and political commitment on key demographic issues.

Through its targeted interventions, the SWEDD project has brought about tangible changes in the lives of hundreds of thousands of vulnerable adolescent girls and women whose future prospects have improved. The challenge remains to transform these quantitative advances into lasting qualitative impacts on their daily lives.

The launch of the SWEDD+ project in 2024 opens up promising new prospects for deepening and extending the impact of SWEDD in the region. SWEDD+ aims to accelerate progress towards the empowerment of women and girls by building on the achievements and lessons learned from previous phases. SWEDD+ promises to be a major lever for achieving the ambitious targets set by countries in terms of the demographic dividend and gender equality by capitalizing on a knowledge base, a network of partners and a model of integrated interventions that have been strengthened over the years.

In 2024, it will be crucial to deepen and extend the scale of SWEDD interventions to anchor the gains and ensure that every woman and girl in the SWEDD countries benefits fully from this innovative project, paving the way towards greater equality.



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: Results framework for the SWEDD-2023 project

BENIN		BURKINA FASO		CÔTE D'IVOIRE		MALI		MAURITANIA		NIGER		CHAD		CAMEROON		GUINEA		REGIONAL		
2023 target	Résultat 2023	2023 target	Résultat 2023	2023 target	Résultat 2023	2023 target	Résultat 2023	2023 target	Résultat 2023	2023 target	Résultat 2023	2023 target	Résultat 2023	2023 target	Résultat 2023	2023 target	Résultat 2023	2023 target	Résultat 2023	Objectif 2024
<b>COMPONENT 1: Improving regional demand for reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health services and empowering women and adolescent girls</b>																				
<b>IODP#1:</b> School retention rate of adolescent girls enrolled in secondary schools benefiting from school enrolment interventions in project intervention areas																				
90%	97%	97%	97%	98%	98%	95%	98%	95%	97%	88%	86%	83%	99%	99%	0%	70%	ND	79%	96%	93%
<b>IODP#2:</b> Percentage of adolescent girls and women benefiting from interventions in safe spaces who have good knowledge of the harmful consequences of child marriage and early pregnancy and the benefits of birth spacing																				
90%	98%	80%	98%	85%	86%	90%	100%	98%	91%	94%	97%	70%	99%	100%	0%	70%	ND	88%	95%	87%
<b>IRI#1:</b> Number of adolescent girls who have benefited from at least one of the interventions relating to schooling (transport services, accommodation, food, school supplies, additional classes, (UCT) or (CCT)) <sup>(18)</sup>																				
30,240	30,237	NA	68,714	146,160	95,527	294,000	272,665	50,000	71,063	NA	21,392	44,300	107,656	30,000	4,430	60,000	10,434	654,700	682,119	1 083 347
<b>IRI#2:</b> Number of beneficiaries completing training in safe spaces																				
30,000	186,873	NA	11,154	157,370	42,500	39,000	39,405	27,000	16,000	NA	29,142	27,841	124,601	8,000	ND	20,000	ND	309,211	449,675	541,859
<b>IRI#3:</b> Number of adolescent girls, young women and women who have benefited from at least one economic support intervention (vocational training, credit, subsidy for productive assets)																				
31,970	55,972	NA	4,631	7,500	2,235	42,191	42,301	5,000	3,534	NA	3,568	15,000	32,445	7,605	2,952	24,000	ND	133,266	147,638	219,717
<b>IRI#4:</b> Number of cases of GBV and harmful practices in the project's intervention zones that have been referred for health, social, legal and security care according to the referral process in place																				
11,000	50	NA	NA	2,432	1,066	450	21	ND	ND	NA	NA	120	196	1,000	0	771	295	15,773	1,628	20,187
<b>COMPONENT 2: Strengthen regional capacity to provide reproductive, maternal, neonatal, infant and nutritional health products and health personnel</b>																				
<b>IODP#3:</b> Number of new users of a modern contraceptive method																				
150,000	142,808	NA	NA	80,797	98,663	230,000	237,191	86,000	77,393	NA	10,147	52,614	289,106	50,000	11,184	33,693	139,218	702,147	1,005,710	780,880
<b>IODP#4:</b> Breakage rate of contraceptive products at service delivery points in project intervention zones																				
10%	20%	NA	NA	15%	12%	5%	14%	40%	51%	50%	38%	40%	21%	25%	0%	10%	5%	18%	23%	14%
<b>IRI#5:</b> Number of pilots tested for last-mile distribution of RMNCNH products according to a checklist																				
3	1	4	3	1	1	2	2	1	1	4	3	2	2	0	0	3	0	12	13	31
<b>IRI#6:</b> Number of midwives in project intervention zones who have completed their basic training with short in-service training sessions as part of quality assurance of reproductive health services (emergency obstetric and neonatal care, and family planning including post-partum family planning and gender)																				
5,000	1,006	3,379	3,379	500	533	2,615	2,750	180	175	870	948	310	3,740	90	83	340	253	9,035	12,867	12,867
<b>COMPONENT 3: Promoting political commitment and strengthening policymaking capacity to implement the project</b>																				
<b>IODP#5:</b> Number of countries that have adopted budgeting for the demographic dividend																				
1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	9	1	9
<b>IODP#6:</b> Number of national and regional legal frameworks supporting girls' enrolment and retention in school, adolescent reproductive health and the abandonment of GBV and harmful practices																				
4	3	NA	NA	3	0	3	2	2	1	1	1	8	12	1	1	2	0	23	20	29
<b>IRI#7:</b> Number of countries with a functioning demographic dividend observatory																				
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	6	8	9
<b>IRI#8:</b> Number of national and regional publications related to demographic transition, population issues and the demographic dividend																				
6	4	5	1	22	14	60	58	30	21	41	18	25	34	2	0	5	3	150	153	192
<b>IRI#9:</b> Number of community and religious leaders committed to actively promoting the enrolment and retention of girls in school, adolescent reproductive health and the abandonment of GBV and harmful practices																				
3,080	1,815	1,931	2,092	1,200	1,769	5,700	6,136	1,000	800	4,260	1,860	1,755	2,886	445	0	250	223	1,919	17,601	20,275
<b>IRI# 10:</b> Percentage of registered complaints actually handled																				
95%	0%	NA	NA	85%	0%	95%	100%	95%	100%	NA	NA	80%	0%	100%	0%	80%	0%	90%	96%	96%

NA: Not Applicable

ND: Not Available/Not Determined.

(18) Unconditional cash transfers (UCT) or conditional cash transfers (CCT)

APPENDIX 2: CRP 2022 recommendations: implementation status

Recommendations	Implementation status	Support	Next steps	Responsible institution
1. Make information on the technical assistance funding mechanism available.	Completed and ongoing	The RTS has adopted a participatory and inclusive approach that encourages commitment and the sharing of information regarding the technical assistance funding mechanism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen commitment by stepping up information-sharing and capitalizing on the achievements of technical assistance.</li> </ul>	RTS
2. Involve the participating countries in the technical assistance evaluation process.	Completed and ongoing	Technical assistance coordination mechanisms established at different levels (PMU – UNFPA Country Office, PMU/CCU – Country Office – RTS/WAHO, RTS/WAHO – Implementing Partners/World Bank).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide feedback of technical assistance results to PMUs of the UNFPA country offices.</li> <li>Provide feedback of technical assistance results to PMUs/CCUs – Country Office – RTS/WAHO.</li> <li>Provide feedback of technical assistance results to RTS/WAHO – Implementing Partners/World Bank.</li> </ul>	RTS
3. Make the operational plan for technical assistance and the coordination mechanism with the countries available according to their specific needs.	Completed and ongoing	Shared technical assistance 2022 operational plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish regular coordination mechanisms.</li> </ul>	RTS
4. Strengthen mechanisms for sharing experiences between countries (virtual resource platform, study trips, technical support missions and creation of thematic exchange forums).	Completed and ongoing	<p>Design of a virtual knowledge management platform for the SWEDD project. The platform has two components: (i) Documentation of all the resources generated by the project for quick and easy access; and (ii) Community of practice to encourage learning centred on the SWEDD project themes and to encourage exchanges on the project themes between the SWEDD countries.</p> <p>Creation of thematic exchange forums by setting up a system for organizing and running bimonthly webinars on the lessons learned and good practices acquired from the implementation of the project and led by the SWEDD countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make platform available to all users.</li> <li>Ensure active community of practice.</li> <li>Schedule webinar for 2024 on lessons learned and good practice from the SWEDD project.</li> </ul>	RTS  Country SWEDD/RTS

Recommendations	Implementation status	Support	Next steps	Responsible institution
4. Strengthen mechanisms for sharing experiences between countries (virtual resource platform, study trips, technical support missions and creation of thematic exchange forums) (continued)	Completed and ongoing	Facilitation of technical support missions from the first SWEDD countries in support of the countries in Phase 2 of the project to promote South–South cooperation.	• All year round.	Country SWEDD/RTS
		Financing of study trips through the funding of beneficiaries/entities, in particular the full payment of training costs for students from different cohorts of the three master’s programmes in the SWEDD project’s CoEs.	• Continue to fund study trips for beneficiaries on topics that could add value to the SWEDD project.	Country SWEDD
5. Support the chair of the Regional Steering Committee to ensure the continued effectiveness of the SWEDD governance body.	Completed and ongoing	Creation of a secretariat within the Presidency to monitor SWEDD activities.	• Maintain funding.	Country SWEDD/SWEDD
6. Support the World Bank in mobilizing partners to extend financing to countries and pool energies to help achieve the SWEDD objectives.		Support for new countries in preparing their PADs.	• Ensure financing from RTS SWEDD funds.	RTS/Country



# SWEDD

AUTONOMISATION  
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AU SAHEL

SAHEL WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT  
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DEMOGRAPHIC  
DIVIDEND



BENIN



BURKINA FASO



CAMEROON



CHAD



COTE D'IVOIRE



THE GAMBIA



GUINEA



MALI



MAURITANIA



NIGER



SENEGAL



TOGO