

PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

LEARNING BRIEF OF GLOBAL SOYEE
META-EVALUATION (2018-2022)



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This learning brief summarises some key findings of the global meta-evaluation of Plan International's Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (SOYEE) programming, based on the analysis of 90 evaluations conducted 2018-2022. The learning brief presents the findings on effectiveness, gender transformation and sustainability of SOYEE by outlining the key outcomes and enablers, as well as illustrative case studies.

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1 PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that works to advance the rights of children and young people, and equality for girls and young women. Plan International's new global strategy 'All Girls Standing Strong' (2022-2027) prioritises Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (SOYEE) as one of its six key thematic Areas of Global Distinctiveness (AOGDs). Plan International follows a [Global Approach to Programme and Influencing](#) in all AOGDs and takes a gender transformative approach to programmes and influencing.

SOYEE focuses on ensuring that vulnerable and excluded young people, especially young women, are resilient and actively engaged in decent work of their choosing, be it waged or self-employment. SOYEE programmes comprise provision of vocational, entrepreneurial and life skills

for young people aged 15-24 years, especially young women, as well as building community support for the initiatives.

SOYEE OBJECTIVE

Vulnerable and excluded youth, especially young women are resilient, and are actively engaged in decent work of their choosing, be it waged or self-employed.

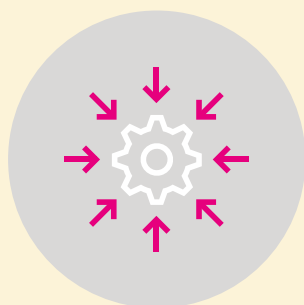
SOYEE complementary components provide structured support to young people to progress along pathways towards entrepreneurship or waged employment, in addition to engaging the private sector to promote decent and gender-responsive workplaces.

Plan International has a diverse portfolio of SOYEE programming that reflects different contexts of operation across urban, rural and humanitarian settings and engages a range of sectors in both formal and informal market economies. Between 2018 and

2022, SOYEE projects were conducted in 56 countries of operation. Figure 1(over) shows the countries which had a SOYEE project in between 2018 and 2022.

SOYEE CORE COMPONENTS

The core components are the building blocks of SOYEE programmes and influencing.



Life, vocational and entrepreneurship skills with community support:

Priority interventions:

- Labour market analysis, youth engagement and family mobilisation
- Life skills and employability skills training (e.g. literacy, numeracy, digital skills)
- Demand-driven vocational, technical and entrepreneurship training



Youth entrepreneurship

Priority interventions:

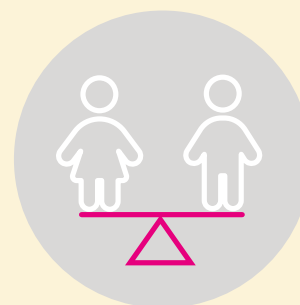
- Business start-up support with coaching and mentoring
- Access to financial services and business development services
- Build peer networks and positive support from families for youth entrepreneurship



Youth employment

Priority interventions:

- Private sector engagement for job placement creation
- Occupational technical and vocational training with coaching and mentoring
- Build networks, links to information and positive support from families for youth employment pathways



Private sector decent and gender-responsive workplaces

Priority interventions:

- Engage private sector to promote decent gender-responsive work conditions
- Trainings for employers on decent work and gender conditions
- Generate evidence on decent work standards

Figure 1: Countries with SOYEE projects between 2018 and 2022*

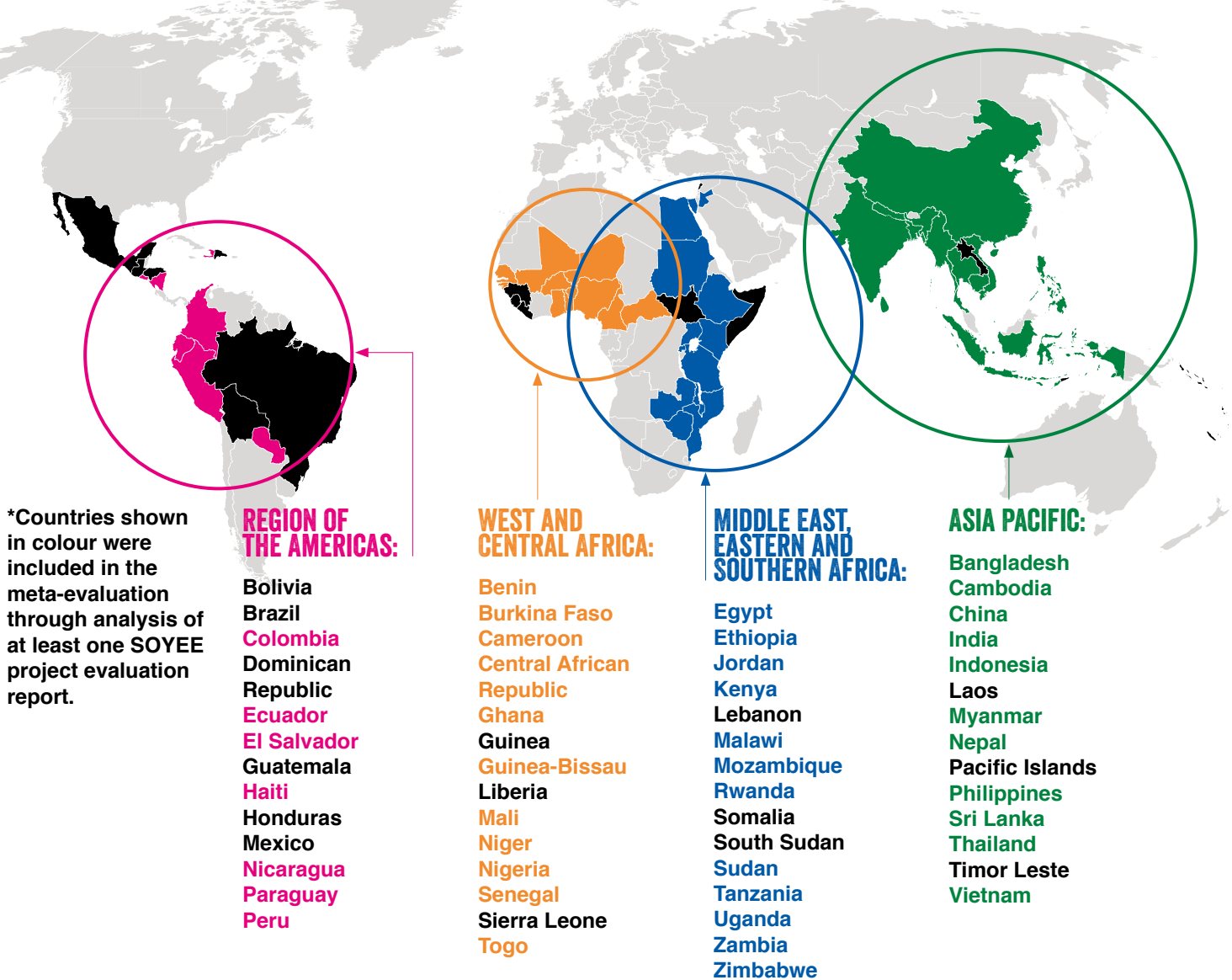
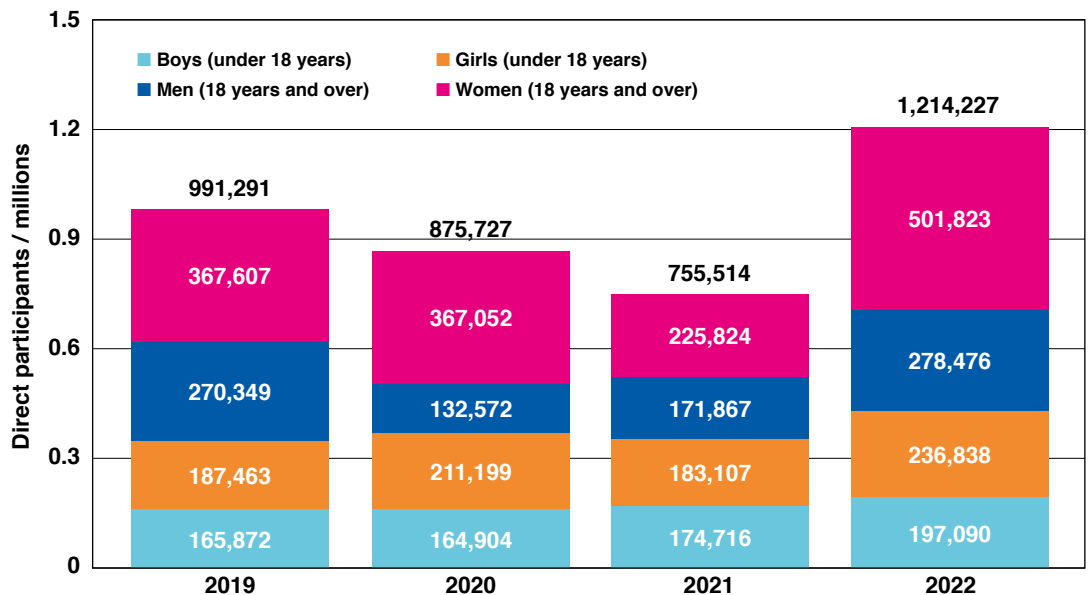


Figure 2: Direct participants of SOYEE projects (2019-2022):

Figure 2 shows the number of people reached as direct participants of SOYEE projects between 2019 and 2022. These years are Plan International's reporting periods, which run from July to June (for example, the 2022 figures are for the period July 2021 to June 2022).



2 META-EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

In 2022, Plan International commissioned an externally-led meta-evaluation to capture the learning on its SOYEE programming through analysis of evaluations conducted between 2018 and 2022. The objectives of the meta-evaluation were to evaluate all components of SOYEE programmes and influencing, outcomes for youth participants, gender transformative aspects of SOYEE programmes, and inclusion of learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A mixed-methods approach based on outcome harvesting was used for the meta-evaluation. Quantitative and qualitative data was extracted from a sample of 90 Plan International project evaluation reports, ensuring representativeness by region and components of SOYEE pathways. The regions and settings of the sampled evaluations, as well as the proportion that addressed each core component, are outlined in Figures 3 to 6. The secondary analysis was supplemented with a small number of key informant interviews with Plan International staff.

Figure 3: Regional distribution of the source evaluations

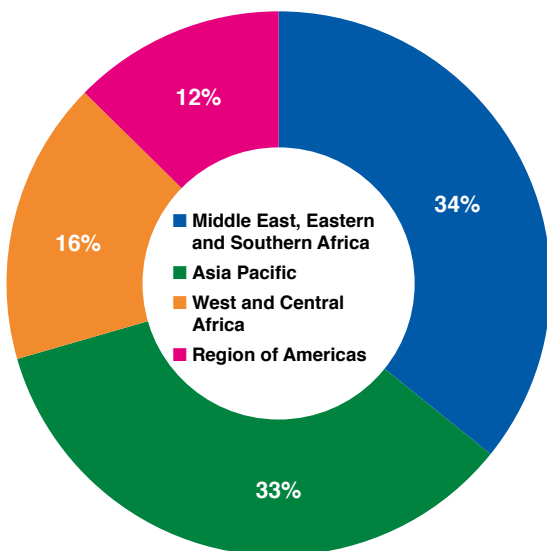


Figure 4: Rural and urban focus of the source evaluations

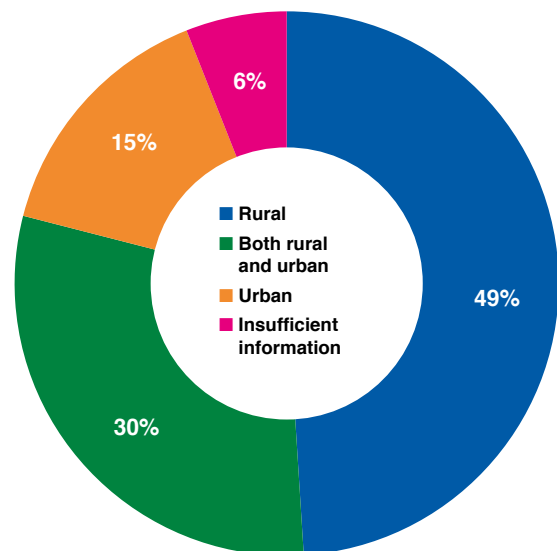


Figure 5: Proportion of source evaluations that addressed each SOYEE pathway component

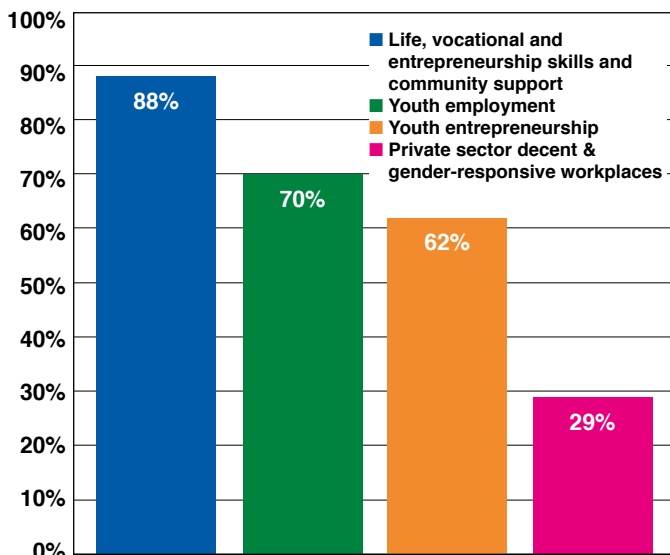
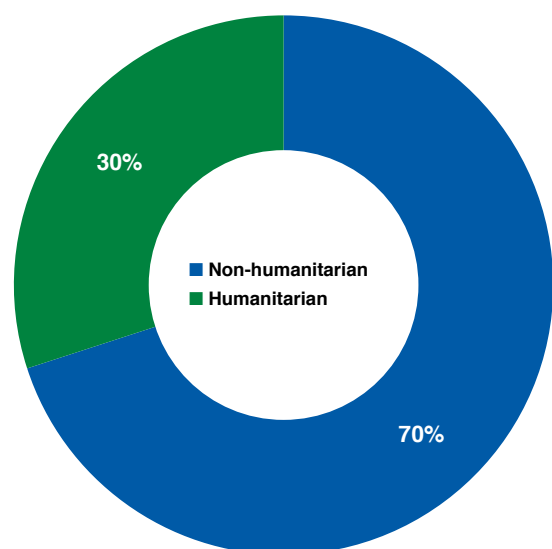


Figure 6: Humanitarian and non-humanitarian contexts distribution of the source evaluations



3 TO WHAT EXTENT DID SOYEE PROJECTS ENHANCE EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND OUTCOMES OF YOUNG PEOPLE?

Overall, a majority of sampled projects (87%) had either fully or largely achieved their objectives, with a further one in ten judged as having somewhat achieved their outcomes. For two projects, there was insufficient detail to make an assessment.

EFFECTIVENESS FINDING 1: SELF-WORTH AND EMPOWERMENT

Outcomes	Key enablers of change
<p>Young people, and particularly young women and girls, who received life, vocational or entrepreneurial skills training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a sense of empowerment and self-worth to improve their own and their families' social and economic wellbeing • Demonstrated agency to become leaders/advocates in their own families and/or communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial literacy training delivered through savings groups/village savings and loans associations (VSLAs) • Awareness-raising activities delivered by NGOs or local organisations to create strong community support, especially for young women and girls • Partnerships with key institutions to create an enabling environment for sustainability • Gender transformative support to address barriers to young women and girls' participation and success

Through life, vocational and entrepreneurial skills training, young people improved their capacity to manage financial resources and ownership of their assets; learnt crucial life, problem solving and employment skills; and became more confident about the possibility to gain meaningful employment or establish/sustain self-employment or income generating activities.

Young people, particularly young women and girls, also had increased awareness of their own rights and confidence in speaking up for gender equality. Across multiple projects young women and girls felt more independent and empowered to advocate for gender equality. This occurred through young women becoming more organised (either through formal or informal mechanisms) enabling them to build knowledge on the importance of women's participation, confidence building, income generation, awareness of violence against women and girls and women's empowerment.



Young women learning digital skills in Smart-Up Factory in Uganda ©Plan International

CASE STUDY

Inspiring girls to pursue digital skills through the Girls' Coding Bootcamp

As part of the **Uganda** Development Smart-Up Factory project, over 50 girls were involved in digital technology training during a girls' coding boot camp. This boot camp provided a platform where women who have successfully entered the IT industry could share their experiences and inspire girls to take up and build on their digital skills. After being inspired at the boot camp, many girls subsequently took up training in HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, as well as web flow, signed up online as freelance programmers and are earning an income from their digital skills.

Furthermore, the holistic approach of the Smart Up Factory in **Uganda** increased young women's awareness of gender equality issues, and built their confidence and capacity to pursue youth-led initiatives (e.g. on climate change issues) and to influence others through leadership.



Rampati, 25, hopes to set up her own barber shop in Nepal when she finishes her training ©Plan International

EFFECTIVENESS FINDING 2: INCREASED CAPACITY FOR SAFE EMPLOYMENT

Outcomes	Key enablers of change
<p>Training in life and vocational skills dialogue helped youth with :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence and self-esteem to pursue secure employment and financial independence • Re-integration into safer employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life skills and entrepreneurial training for youth at risk of harm (e.g. of FGM/C) • Combination of vocational training and VSLA/income generating activities (IGAs) support to find safe alternative sources of income

Vocational and life skills training increased the capacity of young people, especially young women, to engage in decent work. Projects reported that participation in vocational and life skills training increased capacity and contributed to enabling youth to secure decent work and access capital. For example, through Plan International's SAKSHAM project in India, training led to an average increase of 28.9% in monthly salary, as well as an average increase of 66% in family income.

Furthermore, vocational and entrepreneurial skills training reduced engagement with harmful income-generating practices and unsafe activities by providing alternative, safer sources of income to participants. For example, Plan International's 'Obligation to Protect' project in Kenya supported female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) practitioners to stop the practice by forming and running

IGA and VSLA activities as an alternative source of income.

Key enablers to increased capacity for safe employment were the willingness and ability of project leaders to work collaboratively with different stakeholders (including private sector actors and child protection organisations), which helped to establish cohesion and trust in the projects, as well as strong attention to labour market and employer needs.

CASE STUDY

Supporting alternatives to unsafe employment for young women and girls

In Nepal, the Protection of Girls and Young Women Working in Entertainment Establishments Project was primarily concerned with helping young women and girls to remove themselves from sexually exploitative work by developing their skills to help them find alternative employment. The evaluation found that the project successfully removed young women and girls from the worst forms of child labour and reintegrated them into education or safer employment. All of these activities enhanced the economic autonomy of young women and girls, increasing their capacity to make decisions over their own income and to find safer employment. These outcomes were also accompanied by changes in confidence and self-esteem.

EFFECTIVENESS FINDING 3: ALIGNMENT WITH LABOUR MARKET DEMANDS

Outcomes	Key enablers of change
<p>Training in life and vocational skills dialogue helped youth with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved skills and knowledge, including for work in non-traditional sectors Improved autonomy in work choices Improved preparedness for the labour market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment of school and training curricula with labour market needs Provision of essential technical and life skills training, and mentoring

Plan International projects align skills training with employment requirements to ensure that young people were receiving the essential technical skills, life skills and mentoring necessary to apply for labour opportunities and to engage in decent work. In Vietnam, school-enterprise partnerships were established, and school staff and teachers attended bespoke capacity building trainings to understand how to support a labour-market oriented approach, such as by keeping curricula updated in line with market demands.

In terms of access to skill-building, Plan International's work with training centres, teachers, students and other key stakeholders to improve training programmes helped them all understand and reduce barriers to education. This created a more supportive environment for children, particularly girls, to build their social, personal and material assets.

Vulnerable youth have increased autonomy, particularly enhanced confidence, self-efficacy and ability to make

decisions concerning their right to work. This was linked to supporting the development of necessary skillsets to enter the labour market, with young people reporting that their options for employment and income improved as a result. For example, following the two-year Tech Muda project in Indonesia, 73% of trainees were employed, despite graduating before or during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. In addition to the training, Plan International supported the graduates with job placements, job fairs and dissemination of employability information.

EFFECTIVENESS FINDING 4: DEVELOP SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Outcomes	Key enablers of change
<p>Training in entrepreneurial skills provided youth (especially young women) with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical knowledge and business management skills Soft skills, including confidence and self-esteem to start/reactivate/expand their own business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurial skills training to set up and sustain market-responsive businesses Provision of start-up grants to encourage self-employment Comprehensive assessment of youth needs to ensure alignment of activities

Economic empowerment activities and entrepreneurial skills training helped participants to develop life skills (such as confidence and self-esteem) as well as business management skills and technical knowledge. These skills enabled many participants to start up their own new business or expand their existing small business. For example, Plan International's project in Egypt

CASE STUDY

Bringing together labour market requirements and young people's demands

The Support for the Socio-professional Integration of Vulnerable Youth project aimed to support young men and women in Togo to learn vocational skills and access employment. This project conducted consultations with young people as well as local labour market assessments, which were then triangulated to inform the intervention design.

The needs assessment with young people highlighted training-related issues, notably that the content was not well suited to the informal craft market, which was the sector of interest.

The assessment also found that there was a lack of

guidance resulting in many young people choosing already saturated markets, and a lack of access to quality and diversified training. Additionally, there was a lack of community and family support for young women's employment in activities perceived as inappropriate, and workplace safety issues in some apprenticeships offered.

In response, the project strengthened the supervision capacities of professional development organisations and technical services in apprenticeships, identified high value-added sectors open to both young men and women, and carried out awareness raising activities with communities and families on gender stereotypes and career choices.

This project took a holistic and participatory approach, with youth and community consultation effectively integrated into project implementation.

'Strengthening Resilience and Well-being of Syrian Refugee Children and Their Host Communities' worked with both Syrian refugee families and Egyptian families to help mothers, fathers and youths successfully establish start-ups and sustain market-responsive livelihood activities.

Alignment of activities to needs assessments ensured that economic empowerment activities were relevant to and targeted towards the specific needs of young participants and their context. For example, a needs assessment for the above project allowed the intervention activities to be designed based on the needs of participants, ensuring that activities matched the different economic needs of Egyptians and Syrian refugees.

EFFECTIVENESS FINDING 5: BETTER CONDITIONS FOR EQUAL EMPLOYMENT

Outcomes	Key enablers of change
Vulnerable youth, particularly young women and youth with disabilities, better supported for, and with improved and more equal access to, employment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity-building and sensitisation across the community Gender-responsive market analysis, mapping of enterprises and discussions with private and public organisations on gender-responsive workplaces and youth engagement.

Through gender-responsive market analysis, mapping of enterprises, and discussions with the public and private sector, vulnerable youth, particularly young women, gained more access to a labour market that is better prepared to accommodate their needs. Several projects reported that training, awareness-raising and capacity-building activities gave employers and trainers a better understanding of the importance of youth engagement, social inclusion and gender-supportive work environments.

Furthermore, following dialogues some private sector actors reviewed their strategies and expanded their recruitment to engage young people. For example, the YES project in Cartagena in Colombia aimed to enhance business sensitivity about internships and employing vulnerable youth by countering stereotypes that hinder them from being hired and promoting their inclusion in companies.

Sensitisation activities conducted with a wide range of stakeholders (beyond the private sector or training providers) created a more supportive and enabling environment for vulnerable youths pursuing decent employment. In one project in Uganda, this engagement led to some private sector stakeholders to become more willing to offer jobs to trained young women and men.

CASE STUDY

Engaging vulnerable youth in sustainable enterprises

The Strengthening Economic Security of Marginalised Young Women in Bangladesh project in Bangladesh targeted young women who were married before the age of 18, as they tend to be in the bottom 10% of the district population in terms of facing extreme barriers to financial inclusion and economic self-sufficiency.

During the intervention, community members were sensitised to being more in favour of young women and their IGAs. The project used a labour market assessment to identify market linkage opportunities for entrepreneurship and provided vocational training, including electricity, ICT and livestock. The participants also received mentorship and start-up resources, and engaged in VSLAs.

The evaluation involved the participants and their spouses in focus group discussions to understand to what extent the household environment recognises and supports young women's participation in IGAs. In terms of sustainability, the project had a systematic phase-out/handover strategy from the start, by linking with microfinance institutions that would allow a further capital arrangement for improvement of the enterprises in the post-project period.

SUMMARY

SOYEE projects largely demonstrated strong effectiveness in delivering their intended objectives and aspire to be inclusive and reach diverse marginalised groups.

The enablers and barriers identified highlight the importance of offering combinations of training, awareness-raising and material support to address individual, community and cultural barriers.

Further enablers that support sustainable change include alignment with the work of wider partnerships and institutions (e.g. on rights), engagement of employers, and sector-specific approaches.

The meta-evaluation found that SOYEE projects are sophisticated in 'reality checking' business potential, understanding the importance of life skills, self esteem and resilience as well as technical know-how and access to finance.



Sadiya started a knitting business after taking part in a training programme in Nigeria ©Plan International

CASE STUDY

Developing skills and confidence for entrepreneurship

The Youth Economic Empowerment for Resilience and Peacebuilding project in **Nigeria** distinguished levels of vulnerability and exclusion factors by considering gender, level of education, and knowledge of language among other factors. A labour market assessment identified employment and access to finance as the main needs of participants.

Training programmes were therefore tailored towards enhancing the income-generating skills of participants with structures in place to ensure sustainability. The entrepreneurial skills training included an element on developing financial resilience in the context of natural disasters and protecting livelihoods during emergencies.

Furthermore, a savings culture was built among participants through training about VSLAs, financial literacy and business management, while newly established savings groups were linked with mentors.

Start-up cash successfully enabled youths, especially young women, to become self-employed. At the time of the endline evaluation, 89.2% of respondents said that they were self-employed, while 99.5% of respondents who were given a start-up grant said that the grant was 'useful' or 'very useful' in enhancing their income generation.

The endline evaluation of this project revealed that all respondents felt that the trainings addressed their needs, with 96% of respondents having started to utilise the knowledge they had acquired through the project activities.

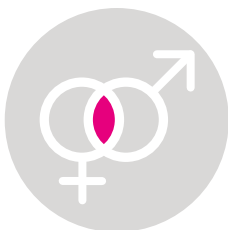
4 TO WHAT EXTENT DID SOYEE PROJECTS INTEGRATE GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES?

Plan International's gender transformative approach addresses the root causes of gender inequality by enhancing the agency, condition and position of girls and young women, engaging with social norms and building an enabling environment, and working with girls and young women in their diversity, as well as boys and young men, to promote gender equality.

PLAN INTERNATIONAL ADDRESSES SIX ELEMENTS TO GRADUALLY ACHIEVE GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE:

GENDER NORMS

Understand and address how gender norms influence children throughout their life course, from birth through to adulthood.



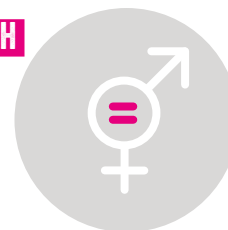
AGENCY

Work to strengthen girls' and young women's agency over the decisions that affect them, as well as by building their knowledge, confidence, skills and access to and control over resources.



WORKING WITH MEN AND BOYS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Work with and support boys, young men and men to embrace positive masculinities and to promote gender equality, while also achieving meaningful results for them.



CONDITION AND POSITION

Improve the conditions (daily needs) and social position (value or status) of girls and young women.



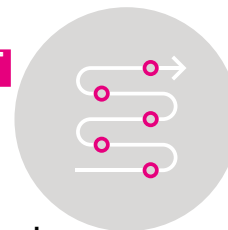
DIVERSITY

Consider girls, boys, young women and young men in all their diversity when identifying and responding to their needs and interests.



ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Foster an enabling environment where all stakeholders work together to support children and youth on their journey towards gender equality.



Overall, the meta-evaluation found that a gender transformative approach is used across most projects. SOYEE projects had better potential when working to improve the condition, position and agency of young women and girls, to address youth needs in all their diversity, and to create an enabling environment for gender equality and inclusion. Successful approaches included:

- Working directly with young women and girls to build their awareness of gender equality, including in the workplace, and their confidence in advocating for economic empowerment and mobilising others for it.
- Combining material support, capacity-building and influencing of key actor groups (participants, communities, civil society, service providers and policy makers), and efforts to enhance coordination among them, in order to address gender barriers at a programmatic and policy level.

- Tailoring activities to address the intersectional needs of young participants beyond gender, including disability, indigenous identity, level of education, knowledge of employment and entrepreneurship.

Fewer projects had good potential in influencing discriminatory gender norms, or mobilising boys and young men to promote gender equality. This may be linked with the challenge of working in very conservative contexts, where gender stereotypes are deeply-rooted and transformative approaches would require more time to permeate communities than what the project timespan allows. Availability of financial resources and technical capacity is a challenge.

The below table outlines key enablers of change identified in projects with high potential to achieve gender transformation in each element.



Wakila, 23, in the cosmetics shop she set up with a savings group loan in Benin ©Plan International

Element of gender transformation	Key enablers of change
GENDER NORMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and intergenerational dialogues • Increasing the reach of influencing activities • Engaging local representatives to institutionalise change
AGENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building knowledge, confidence, critical consciousness and ability to speak out about issues • Enabling young women to identify risks for improved protection • Support young women to mobilise and influence others for gender equality and inclusion
WORKING WITH MEN AND BOYS FOR GENDER EQUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase young men's understanding of and mobilisation for in gender equality (e.g. positive masculinity programmes, awareness sessions) • Develop non-violent, gender equal masculinities among young men and boys • Address young men and boys' particular needs related to gender (e.g. sexual and reproductive health and rights)
CONDITION AND POSITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill-building through training (e.g. life skills, vocational skills, financial literacy) • Support female-led peer networks • Community-level influencing • Provision of material resources as part of SOYEE intervention
DIVERSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with vulnerable or marginalised youth • Take into account intersectional characteristics, including gender, age, disability, indigenous identity, level of education, knowledge of employment and entrepreneurship
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen structures through infrastructure improvements, capacity building for service providers, and participatory monitoring and follow-up support • Influence to improve policies and budget allocations • Support improving coordination among actors or services

5 TO WHAT EXTENT DID SOYEE PROJECTS SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE YOUTH OUTCOMES?

The vast majority (90%) of sampled projects were considered to have achieved outcomes that were either very likely (39%) or somewhat likely (51%) to be sustainable.

KEY ENABLERS OF SUSTAINABILITY

- ✓ **Alignment with diverse local actors i.e., to facilitate training, link with jobs, provide apprenticeships and incubator programmes**
- ✓ **Handover strategies with Microfinancing Institutions, private sector and training providers**
- ✓ **Inclusion of young men and boys and families to support more long-term change**
- ✓ **Partnership with local organisations with sustained presence**
- ✓ **Using pre-existing and self-sustaining mechanisms such as savings groups**

KEY BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABILITY

- ✗ **Blurred exit plans and sustainability strategies**
- ✗ **Financial and staff resourcing that is insufficient to support sustainability of outcomes**
- ✗ **Limited knowledge sharing and lesson learning from other/previous similar projects**
- ✗ **Short duration of activities/project cycles and lack of post-intervention support to vulnerable groups in comparison to the longer timeframes needed to see change and measure impact**



Khadiza is cultivating vegetables in Bangladesh
©Plan International

Most projects whose results were very likely to be sustained had built long-term capacity of key actors by delivering appropriate and good quality interventions, such as through savings groups, or by delivering training aligned to the requirements of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions.

Mobilisation of savings is a factor conducive to sustainability because of the strong empowerment of the communities and the endogenous nature of the solutions deriving from savings groups, which make the best use of local resources and skills. For example, in two states in Nigeria, a multi-sector project also provided other members of the project communities with opportunities for financial inclusion through VSLAs.

As an example of partnerships for sustainability, Plan International Peru improved the image and positioning of the Technical-Productive Education Centres (CETPRO) through supporting quality training, capacity building of teachers, and engaging with local governments to ensure the CETPROs continue to carry out actions to promote youth employment.

To build sustainable outcomes for young people, SOYEE projects created skills, knowledge and results that cannot be taken away or wane with time. These included life, vocational and entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, as well as related areas such as financial literacy, gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender-based violence (GBV) issues.

Furthermore, cascading knowledge from direct participants to indirect ones created the conditions for sustainability. For example, in a climate-focused project in Vietnam, the knowledge and skills about climate change resilience were transferred from participants to local stakeholders, bringing institutional sustainability beyond the project cycle.

At the community level, projects had higher chances of sustainability because they built awareness and ownership of economic empowerment initiatives and benefits. For example, the Women and Youth Saving for Empowerment project in Benin anchored the intervention to the community-level, built local awareness about IGAs, and fostered savings habits and community participation.

Several projects established formal mechanisms for sustained impact, such as participatory agricultural field schools in Togo, which young people are scaling up into agricultural or livestock cooperatives in their localities. In some cases, sustainability came from policy-level change, such as in Nepal with the development and implementation of the Code of



Janis, 25, in her kitchen preparing mazamorras (dessert) in Peru ©Plan International

Conduct for decent employment in the hospitality sector.

Lessons on sustainability include the motivation and buy-in of direct participants as a natural enabler, with objectives relevant to cultural norms and attitudes. A well-resourced project builds sustainability, such as by building capacity of staff who can remain involved afterwards, but sustainability can be undermined if funding post project closure is not secured. Short duration projects and those less focused on lesson learning have been less successful. Long-term local partner presence and the establishment of strong local partnerships contributes to sustainability, especially when they remain engaged after Plan International support ends. It is important to consider post-intervention support to certain vulnerable groups, for whom the immediate results of activities may not be sufficient to ensure long-term benefits and sustainability.

6 WHAT WERE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLAN INTERNATIONAL?

THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE META-EVALUATION ON EFFECTIVENESS, SUSTAINABILITY AND GENDER TRANSFORMATION WERE:

- 1 Strengthen internal networks and knowledge management functions to improve learning and knowledge sharing.
- 2 Disseminate the success factors on sustainability identified within the meta-evaluation internally and learn from the enabling factors identified for effectiveness, particularly the need to apply an intergenerational and cross-sectoral approach to activities.
- 3 In order to further gender transformative change, take a longer-term view of tackling deeply rooted negative cultural beliefs and stereotyping (which does not change in the short term) by developing SOYEE programming strategies beyond that of a single project time period.
- 4 Apply gender as a criterion for participant selection in relation to the objectives of the project, rather than as a pre-determined option.
- 5 **Consider the following areas for future research and evaluations:**
 - a) How the gender composition of savings groups affects their success in different aspects (economically, socially, etc.).
 - b) Social value of savings groups and group-based trainings, and if they can function beyond their core SOYEE purpose, as platforms for community dialogue (including in humanitarian or conflict-affected settings).

CONCLUSION

The meta-evaluation provides key learning on the effectiveness, gender transformative potential and sustainability of SOYEE projects. Critically, the analysis finds that most projects achieved their objectives and that attained outcomes are likely to be sustainable.

In terms of gender transformation, SOYEE projects particularly work to improve the condition, position and agency of young women and girls, to address youth needs in all their diversity, and to create an enabling environment for gender equality and inclusion.

The meta-evaluation informs the technical and strategic direction of SOYEE at a pivotal juncture of the start of Plan International's new five-year global strategy and the development of SOYEE programme models.

Action-oriented internal dissemination of the meta-evaluation has promoted quality across Plan International by facilitating application of the findings in current SOYEE programming.

The meta-evaluation findings and recommendations inform the ongoing work of Plan International's Global SOYEE Network to ensure that vulnerable and excluded young people, especially young women, are resilient and actively engaged in decent work of their choosing.

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PLAN INTERNATIONAL

More information on Plan International's SOYEE work is available at www.plan-international.org/skills-and-work/

ABOUT PLAN INTERNATIONAL

We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected.

As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity.

We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For 85 years, we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 80 countries.

CONTACT US

Plan International
Global Hub
Dukes Court, Duke Street, Woking,
Surrey GU21 5BH, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1483 755155 / Fax: +44 (0) 1483 756505

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