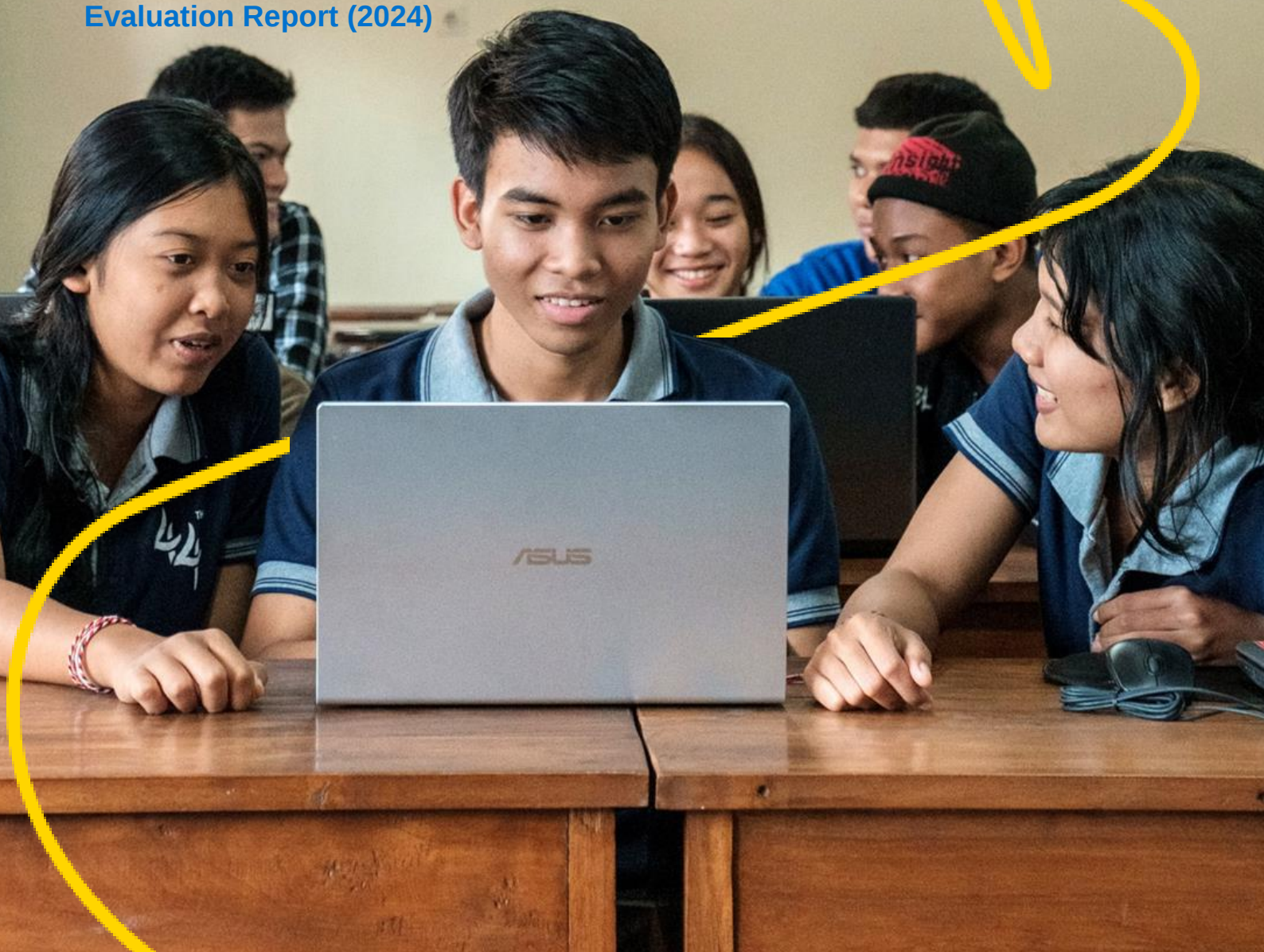




Until we are all equal

The Evaluation and Framework Development of Digital SOYEE Projects

Evaluation Report (2024)



Acknowledgements

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We believe this evaluation will provide valuable insights to inform the future development and implementation of digital solutions within Plan International's SOYEE programs.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AOGD – Area of Global Distinctiveness

BPO – Business Process Outsourcing

CBO – Community-Based Organisations

CSWD – City Social Welfare and Development Office

ECD – Early Childhood Development

FGD – Focused Group Discussion

GTA – Gender Transformative Approach

GTM – Gender Transformative Marker

ILO – International Labour Organisation

KIIs – Key Informant Interviews

LFDP – Learning Framework for Digital Development Programming

LGBTIQ+ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Questioning

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

MFIs – Microfinance Institutions

OECD – Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development

PESO – Public Employment Service Office

PPPs – Public-Private Partnerships

PYAP – Pag-Asa Youth Association of the Philippines

RCESS – Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Scalability, and Sustainability

SDG – Sustainable Development Goal

SOYEE – Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

S4YE – Solutions for Youth Employment

TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training

VSLA – Village Savings and Loans Associations

WEF – World Economic Forum

W4W – Wired4Work



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Executive Summary



The primary purpose of this study is to conduct an evaluation of the digital solutions integrated within **Plan International's Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (SOYEE)** programs. This evaluation aims to achieve two main objectives:

Objective 1: Assess the Digital Solutions: The study evaluates the effectiveness of the existing digital tools and platforms utilized in the SOYEE programs. This involves examining their impact on enhancing the vocational and entrepreneurial skills of young people, particularly young women. The evaluation focuses on key criteria such as relevance (how well the digital solutions meet the needs of the youth), coherence (how seamlessly these solutions integrate with other program components), effectiveness (the degree to which they achieve desired outcomes), scalability (the potential to expand successful solutions to a broader audience), and sustainability (the long-term viability and impact of these digital interventions).

Objective 2: Develop a Digital SOYEE Framework: Based on the findings and insights from the evaluation, the study aims to develop a robust framework for the implementation of digital solutions within SOYEE programs. This framework will serve as a strategic guide for Plan International, outlining best practices and key approaches for leveraging digital tools to empower youth. It will highlight Plan International's unique value proposition in the realm of digital youth empowerment and provide practical recommendations to enhance program effectiveness, ensure scalability, and promote sustainability.

Additionally, the study seeks to capture evidence-based insights and lessons learned from the digital SOYEE projects, offering practical and actionable recommendations that can be applied in various contexts, both urban and rural. The ultimate goal is to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that marginalized and vulnerable young people, especially girls and young women, can access and benefit from digital opportunities for education, employment, and entrepreneurship. By incorporating the perspectives of youth participants, practitioners, and other stakeholders, the evaluation aims to provide valuable insights that will inform and guide the future development of SOYEE programs in a digital landscape.

Methodology

The evaluation adopted a qualitative approach, collecting and analyzing qualitative data to ensure a comprehensive assessment of the digital solutions within the SOYEE projects. The methodology was guided by Plan International's Gender Transformative Approach (GTA) and a rigorous feminist framework to ensure inclusivity and empowerment.

The initial phase involved a desk review of existing evaluation reports from 12 SOYEE projects across various regions. These projects were assessed based on their implementation of digital solutions and their alignment with the Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Scalability,

and Sustainability criteria. The desk review focused on identifying the specific digital tools used, the target groups, and the evaluation methodologies employed in these projects.

From the desk review, three projects were selected for further data collection and case study analysis. This selection was based on the diversity and scope of the SOYEE intervention, the geographical diversity, thematic focus (e.g., skills development, financial literacy), and target demographics.

The shortlisted projects underwent a detailed case study analysis which involved a

comprehensive review of project documents and data to understand the implementation strategies and outcomes. Following a comprehensive evaluation process, the initiative narrowed its primary data collection process to the Wired4Work project, implemented in Indonesia and the Philippines. While the Young People Lead Stabilization Efforts project in Nigeria and the Hope Together I project in Egypt showed promise, they were ultimately deemed less suitable due to their alignment with SOYEE's core objectives, logistical challenges, and organizational priorities.

Based on the detailed analysis and the evaluation criteria, the evaluation team, in conjunction with the Plan International evaluation team management/reference group, identified the project that demonstrated significant impact and potential for scalability, as well as held the most potential for primary data collection success.

The Wired4work project was selected due to its robust integration of digital solutions, its emphasis on gender inclusion, and its tangible impact on

Stakeholders' Perspectives

The evaluation incorporated insights from various stakeholders, including youth participants, Plan International staff, partner organizations, and relevant private sector entities.

Youth Participants reported significant gains in confidence and digital literacy, which directly enhanced their employability. They particularly valued the practical skills training in areas such as resume building, job interview preparation, and business proposal development. The accessibility of digital tools, especially mobile-friendly platforms like YES!ACADEMY, was highly appreciated as it allowed them to learn and engage from anywhere. Additionally, the digital platforms facilitated a strong sense of community and peer support, enabling participants to share experiences, challenges, and solutions, which was particularly empowering for young women.

Plan International Staff emphasized the seamless integration of digital solutions with traditional SOYEE programs, ensuring that the digital interventions were relevant and effectively addressed the needs of the target groups. They

youth employability and skills development. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted exclusively for the Wired4Work (W4W project) with stakeholders including youth participants, the private sector employers, Plan International staff, and partners, to gather primary data and insights. The project utilized digital platforms like YES!ACADEMY and YES!ME to provide market-driven technical and vocational training to over 12,000 youth, demonstrating significant gains in digital literacy, confidence, and employment outcomes.

This multi-phase methodology ensured a rigorous evaluation process, capturing a wide range of data and stakeholder perspectives to provide a comprehensive assessment of the digital solutions within the SOYEE programs. Despite data being collected from one project (Wired4Work! In Indonesia and Philippines), this evaluation provides a detailed evaluation of all 12 SOYEE digital projects that were sampled.



highlighted the importance of incorporating gender-transformative strategies to challenge traditional gender norms and empower young women, creating an enabling environment for gender equality. Staff also underscored the need for continuous learning and adaptation to optimize program efficiency and effectiveness, with regular monitoring and evaluation being essential for

making data-driven decisions and improving program outcomes.

Partner Organizations, including community-based organizations and government offices, played a crucial role in the design and implementation of digital solutions. Their local expertise ensured that interventions were contextually relevant and culturally appropriate. Partners emphasized the importance of building local capacity to sustain digital interventions, with training and support provided to local organizations helping ensure the long-term viability of digital solutions. The collaborative approach between Plan International and local partners fostered a sense of ownership and

commitment, essential for the sustainability and scalability of digital interventions.

Private Sector Entities highlighted the value of public-private partnerships in driving digital skills development and youth employment. Their involvement brought in essential resources, expertise, and networks. The private sector's input ensured that the digital skills training provided was aligned with market demands, enhancing the employability of youth participants. Additionally, private sector partners emphasized the importance of leveraging innovative technologies and digital platforms to bridge the digital divide and provide equitable access to education and employment opportunities.

These perspectives underscore the importance of a collaborative, inclusive, and adaptive approach to implementing digital solutions within the SOYEE framework. The insights from stakeholders highlight the need for continuous improvement, local partnerships, and gender-transformative strategies to empower youth, particularly young women, and enhance their access to education and employment opportunities.

Key Findings

The evaluation of the digital solutions within Plan International's Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship projects revealed several critical insights:

1. **Empowerment through Digital Skills:**

The digital solutions significantly enhanced the confidence, digital literacy, and employability of young people, particularly young women. Across the digital SOYEE programs, young women have equal access to digital platforms, which increases their confidence and ability to use digital tools, directly contributing to their job readiness and employability. For instance, the review of the W4W project in Indonesia revealed that 89.8% of respondents expressed confidence in their work skills, and 89% acknowledged that the project positively influenced their professional self-esteem by motivating them and expanding their knowledge, understanding, experience, and self-assurance. The use of platforms such as YES!ACADEMY provided

gamified and traditional online courses, which improved access to education and employment opportunities. Participants reported substantial gains in practical skills, such as resume building, job interview preparation, and business proposal development, directly contributing to their ability to secure meaningful employment.

2. **Relevance and Coherence:** The digital interventions were well-aligned with the needs of the target groups and seamlessly integrated with traditional SOYEE programs. This coherence ensured that the digital solutions addressed relevant challenges and contributed effectively to the overarching goals of the SOYEE program. In both Indonesia and the Philippines, participants appreciated the accessibility and practicality of the digital tools, which were tailored to their specific contexts. In Indonesia, among the 277

respondents who took part in the training, 77.6% of the youth expressed that the training activities were relevant and effectively met their needs.

3. **Sustainability and Scalability:** The SOYEE programs ensured lasting impact by integrating into local institutions and aligning with national policies, supported by government and educational partnerships. High participant satisfaction and capacity-building efforts enabled independent continuation, while adaptable hybrid training models fostered scalability across diverse regions. the **Wired4Work!** project embedded digital training in local vocational centers and equipped educators through Training of Trainers, ensuring continuity and positioning the project for further expansion across diverse socioeconomic contexts.
4. **Barriers to Access:** Despite the successes, significant challenges remain in ensuring all participants have consistent access to digital tools. Inadequate internet connectivity and limited access to personal devices were prominent barriers that must be addressed to enable broader implementation. Addressing these issues will be crucial for the future scalability and sustainability of digital interventions
5. **Gender-Inclusive Strategies:** The digital solutions were designed with Plan International's gender-transformative approach, focusing on addressing the specific needs of young women, such as lack of access to quality education and skills training, flexible work arrangements, and access to financial services. The lack of support structures, like childcare, reduces opportunities for women to participate in the labor market, and this challenges traditional gender norms that idealize their caregiving role and perpetuate gender stereotypes. This approach significantly contributed to the empowerment of young women, enabling them to participate more fully in the digital economy. Participants reported increased confidence and a greater sense of agency in pursuing their career goals.
6. **Local Partnerships:** The importance of local partnerships in the design, implementation, and sustainability of digital solutions was a key finding. Collaboration with local organizations and stakeholders ensured that the digital interventions were contextually relevant and culturally appropriate.
7. **Continuous Learning:** Continuous learning and adaptation were identified as crucial for optimizing program efficiency and effectiveness. This emphasis on continuous learning and development reflected a commitment to providing long-term support and opportunities for participants to enhance their skills and knowledge.
8. **Community and Peer Support:** The digital platforms facilitated a supportive community among youth participants, promoting peer-to-peer learning and mentorship. This community support was particularly beneficial for young women seeking to navigate traditionally male-dominated fields. The evaluation highlighted the importance of fostering such networks to enhance the overall impact of digital interventions.

These key findings underscore the critical role of digital solutions in empowering youth, particularly young women, within the SOYEE framework. The insights gained from the evaluation provide valuable guidance for the future development and implementation of digital interventions, ensuring they are relevant, effective, scalable, and sustainable.

1. Introduction

1.1. Project Background

Plan International, an organization that champions child rights with a specific focus on girls and young women). The organization has identified a critical need to equip young people with skills for employment and entrepreneurship. This is particularly relevant in today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, which offers significant opportunities to address challenges in finding decent work and fostering entrepreneurial abilities.

Plan International's global strategy, *"All Girls Standing Strong" (2022-2027)*, prioritizes Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (SOYEE) programs. SOYEE equips young people, particularly **girls** and young women (aged 15-24), with vocational and entrepreneurial skills alongside life skills development and community support. This approach aims to empower young people and help them secure decent work.

SOYEE Program Overview

The SOYEE program aims to empower vulnerable and excluded young people, particularly young women, by providing vocational, entrepreneurial, and life skills. The program also focuses on building community support and creating pathways towards both wages and self-employment. It applies a gender-transformative approach to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and to create an enabling environment for gender equality.

The 2022 Global SOYEE Meta-evaluation confirmed the program's effectiveness in empowering youth and fostering gender transformation. However, it also highlighted a gap in research on how digital tools are being utilized within SOYEE programs.

Digital SOYEE Solutions

Plan International has integrated digital solutions to enhance the reach, effectiveness, and efficiency of its SOYEE programs, especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the digital divide faced by marginalized girls and young women, the organization focuses on using technology to overcome these barriers.

Digital SOYEE solutions include:

- Training in digital skills
- Digital tools for employability and entrepreneurship training
- Monitoring and evaluation of SOYEE projects
- Support for Saving groups by enhancing their efficiency, scalability, and sustainability.

Key digital innovations within SOYEE include the YES! Digital ecosystem, comprising:

- **YES!ACADEMY:** An e-learning system offering gamified and traditional online courses
- **YES!ME:** A platform for data collection, analysis, and real time M&E.

Plan International developed the Learning Framework for Digital Development Programming (LFDP) to evaluate the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and scalability of these digital interventions.

Importance of Digital SOYEE Solutions

The increasing importance of digital skills and remote working opportunities highlights the critical role of Plan International's digital SOYEE solutions. These solutions help bridge the digital divide, ensuring that vulnerable young people, especially young women, can participate in the digital economy. The evaluation of projects like **WIRED4WORK** will guide the strategic development of digital SOYEE interventions, ensuring they are relevant, effective, and scalable.

The project addresses this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of existing digital SOYEE interventions. The evaluation will assess how well these solutions meet the needs of target groups, integrate with traditional interventions, and contribute to achieving desired program outcomes. Furthermore, it will explore the potential for scaling up successful digital solutions and ensuring their long-term sustainability. By incorporating the perspectives of young people, practitioners, and other stakeholders, the evaluation will provide valuable insights to guide the future development of SOYEE programs in a digital world.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study has two primary objectives:

Evaluate SOYEE Digital Solutions:

- This objective focuses on comprehensively assessing the effectiveness of existing digital solutions within Plan International's Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (SOYEE) programs.
- The evaluation applies the OECD¹ criteria for development co-operation and effectiveness, ensuring a comprehensive and structured assessment framework.
- Additionally, the evaluation incorporates stakeholder perspectives, including youth participants, practitioners, and other relevant stakeholders, to gain a well-rounded understanding of the solutions' impact.

Develop a Digital SOYEE Framework:

- Based on the findings and insights gained from the evaluation process, this objective aims to develop a robust Digital SOYEE Framework.
- This framework will serve as a guide for Plan International, outlining key approaches and strategies for effectively implementing digital solutions within the SOYEE program.
- The framework will also highlight Plan International's unique value proposition in the space of youth empowerment through digital solutions.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the digital solutions within the SOYEE projects implemented by Plan International. Specifically, the study aims to assess the effectiveness, relevance, coherence, scalability, and sustainability of these digital solutions within the SOYEE framework. Additionally, the study aims to develop the digital SOYEE framework to provide guidance on key approaches and strategies for implementing digital

¹ [Evaluation Criteria | OECD](#)

solutions within the SOYEE framework.

Furthermore, the study seeks to capture evidence-based digital solutions that facilitate the achievement of SOYEE's objectives. This includes capturing lessons learned and offering practical and actionable recommendations that can be applied in both urban and rural contexts.

The evaluation serves several purposes:

1. **Assessment of Effectiveness:** To determine how well the SOYEE program's digital solutions empower marginalized youth, particularly girls and young women, and whether the program design considers the realities young girls face and ensures equitable access and participation in achieving employment and entrepreneurship outcomes.
2. **Relevance and Coherence:** To examine the alignment of the digital solutions with the needs and contexts of the target participants, ensuring that they address relevant challenges and contribute coherently to the overarching goals of the SOYEE program.
3. **Scalability:** To evaluate the potential for scaling up successful digital solutions to reach a broader audience of marginalized youth, thereby increasing the program's impact and effectiveness.
4. **Sustainability:** To assess the efficiency of SOYEE digital platforms by considering the long-term viability and sustainability of the digital solutions within the SOYEE framework. This includes factors such as resource availability, institutional support, and community acceptance. Additionally, to evaluate to what extent do the outcomes (employment and entrepreneurial outcomes) reflect on the investments made to set up and implement these projects

Aligned with Plan International's Gender Transformative Approach (GTA), this evaluation will assess the SOYEE digital solutions, aiming to generate actionable insights for program improvement, enhanced quality and impact of the solutions, and strengthened partnerships. This ultimately positions Plan International as a global leader in implementing digital solutions for youth empowerment.

1.3. Evaluation Scope

The scope of this study covers a range of digital solutions in SOYEE projects. Digital SOYEE includes skills training, support to access wage or self-employment, and employment in digital sectors. Digital solutions are applied at different stages of the SOYEE programme, including the analysis and design phase, recruitment, training, links to jobs, starting businesses, financial services, networking, as well as in data management and monitoring.

By covering a range of digital solutions in SOYEE, the study explores how and to what extent digital solutions facilitate achieving SOYEE objectives in terms of gaining skills and accessing and retaining wage or self-employment. Evaluation of different types of digital solutions enables a level of analysis to bring together lessons learned, conclusions, and recommendations for global development of digital SOYEE. Inclusion of different digital solutions involves various types of access, such as IT labs, smartphones, low-end phones, as well as different types of users, considering educational level and residence in urban or rural contexts.

The evaluation and framework development focus on selected countries where Plan International has deployed SOYEE interventions, considers the diversity of contexts and challenges faced by the youth in different regions. The primary target audience is the youth aged 15-24 years old, with specific attention

given to marginalized and vulnerable groups, including girls and young women, and those from low-income communities. Plan International received 30 project proposals for consideration as part of the evaluation's design phase. An initial screening process was conducted, narrowing the selection to 12 projects. This process was based on two main criteria: first, determining which projects had completed evaluation reports; and second, assessing the extent of digital integration within each project. The projects with minimal digitization, such as those that used basic digital tools like Kobo for data gathering but did not digitize crucial SOYEE components, were removed.

The **final 12 projects** chosen for this evaluation, implemented in various geographies and circumstances are: Wired4work! 1 (Indonesia and Philippines), Tech Muda (Indonesia), Fit for the Future (Vietnam), Saksham PLUS (India), The Smart-Up Project (Ethiopia and Uganda), Digitalization and E-banking for Saving Groups in Dogbo and Klouékanmè (Benin), Affordable Internet Access & Life Skills for Youth in Koforidua (Ghana), Hope Together (Egypt), Promoting Youth Employment in Urban Districts (PASEWAY) Project (Ethiopia), Young People Lead Stabilization Efforts in the Lake Chad Basin (Nigeria), SDEPAY (Rwanda), and Bridges to the Future (Indonesia and Vietnam). These selected projects were implemented between the years **2017-2021**

The evaluation assesses various digital platforms, tools, and initiatives implemented by Plan International, including but not limited to online skills training programs, job matching platforms, entrepreneurship support tools, and digital mentorship programs. Key stakeholders, including youth participants, Plan International staff, partner organizations, the private sector, and relevant experts, are engaged through interviews and focus group discussions.

1.4. Country and regional context

Indonesia

Location

Indonesia is a country in Southeast Asia, between the Indian and Pacific oceans. It is located around the equator (5.000°S and 120.000°E) and covers a total land area of 1,904,569 square with its capital, Jakarta, located near the Northwestern coast of Java, one of its main islands. Indonesia has a total of 38 provinces (Adam, 2024).

Population

Indonesia is the most populous country in Southeast Asia largely due to its strategic location of being a meeting point of two of the world's population groups, Asians in the west and Melanesians in the east. The 2024 World Population Renew, 2024 estimate places the population of Indonesia at 279,853,056, the 4th highest worldwide. In the last 5 years (2019 to 2023) the population of Indonesia grew at an average rate of **1.07%** which translates to about 2.73 million people added annually.

Indonesia's population distribution varies across the country. While the country has an overall

population density of 140.08 persons per square KM, its most populous city, Jakarta located on the island of Java, has a population density of approximately 15,342 people per square Km. About **57%** of the country's population lives on Java with over 14 of its cities having over 1 million persons.

The Population of Indonesia is characterized as young (UN, 2024), a quarter of the country's population is less than 15 years old, and 10 to 24-year-olds make up a quarter of the country's population. The median age is 29.9 and a majority (**68%**) of the population falls between the 15 to 64 years range. This young population can be attributed to the country's high birth rates, due to its high Muslim population estimated at **87.2%** of the population (UN, 2024). Other factors that contribute to the increase in Indonesia's population include lower death rates and immigration. In terms of sex distribution, females make up **49.65%** of the country's population (Statista, 2024). Indonesia's size, young

population, and strategic location makes it an important country within the region and globally.

Youth Employment Livelihoods and Education

The government's commitment to adopting and implementing pro-employment policies has steadily declined youth unemployment in the last decade. Youth unemployment declined from **17.27%** in 2014 to **13.26%** in 2023 (Statista, 2024). This has translated to a reduction in poverty and an improvement in livelihoods among the population although these trends vary largely across regions. Several factors are responsible for this trend including the government's investment in education which has contributed to higher school participation rates and average length of schooling: young Indonesians are staying longer in school (ILO 2015).

In terms of internet usage, the World Bank's Beyond Unicorn 2024 report shows that young adults are ten times more likely to have mobile internet access than senior citizens. At the same time, those with tertiary education are five times more likely to connect than those whose education is limited to junior secondary attainment or less. In addition, individuals from low-income families are three times less likely to have Internet access than children born in the most prosperous families.

Indonesia currently ranks **77 out of 183** member states in the **Youth Development Index** and has shown a rapid incline in the last decade (Commonwealth 2023). The literacy rate for young Indonesians was estimated at **99.65%** for females and **99.68%** for males and the country has low rates of out-of-school youth; 29.3% for females and **24.6%** for males (ISDB 2019).

Digital Infrastructure

Before 2019, the digital infrastructure in Indonesia was characterized by connectivity issues which created a digital divide across the country further exacerbated by its geographic profile of several disconnected islands (Kimura and Chen 2023). Restrictions to physical interactions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital adoption in the country, causing stakeholders to focus on key priority areas including personal devices and network connectivity (hard

infrastructure), strengthening digital skills and literacy (soft infrastructure) amongst others.

To achieve this, the country invested in several initiatives which have led to

- I. Availability of high-speed mobile and fixed broadband networks. **98%** of Indonesia's population is covered by mobile cellular networks, connecting all 514 cities to the internet. The adoption of high-speed fixed broadband with speeds exceeding 10 Mbps has significantly increased. Although Indonesia has only four fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 people, much lower than the regional average of 14 per 100, there has been notable improvement in recent years. Furthermore, the percentage of subscribers able to connect to 4G networks has risen dramatically to **90%**, up from just **35%** in 2017 (Indonesia Digital Infrastructure Report, 2021).
- II. Increased smartphone ownership is evident, with **63%** of the country's population owning smartphones, which has led to increased internet access and usage, particularly among younger demographics. Meanwhile, mobile cellular ownership is higher, currently standing at 130 per 100 persons, indicating that many people own more than one mobile phone. As of early 2023, a total of 358.8 million cellular mobile connections were active in Indonesia.
- III. Installation of satellites to cover areas that are unreachable by mobile or fixed broadband services. Indonesia currently has 8 satellites to provide internet connectivity in more remote parts of the country.
- IV. Creation of data centers; the country had at least 26 data centers located both domestically and internationally, with plans for further development to support its growing digital economy.
- V. Investment in upskilling digital talent across the country – The Minister of Communication and Informatics launched several initiatives to improve digital literacy, skills, and education. Among these are the Siberkreasi National Movement for Digital Literacy, and Digital

Talent Scholarship for fresh graduates amongst others.

- VI. Revision of the country's regulatory framework that is in line with the growing trends in digital development.

Digital Policy Framework

The government of Indonesia established a digital policy framework to accelerate its digital transformation across the public, private, and business sectors. Implementation of this framework is led by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (MCI) and covers five priority areas; increasing digital infrastructure, especially in rural hard-to-reach areas, developing and rolling out 5G technology across the country, initiating comprehensive and sustainable human resource development in the digital sector, establishing a digital transformation roadmap for all key sectors of the economy and completing all required legislation to support a digital ecosystem including the Bill of Personal Data Protection (RUU, PDP) and Job creation in the telecommunication/broadcasting sectors (Lurong, 2023).

In its 2020-2024 strategic plan, the Indonesian Ministry of Communications and Information Infrastructure clearly laid out key strategic objectives of establishing digital infrastructure and accelerating the rollout of Information

Communications Technology, ICT in the country (ADB,2021). Key programs being implemented during this period include:

- I. ICT Infrastructure development program which focuses on increasing the accessibility of fast and affordable internet services, increasing the area and coverage of digital television broadcasts, increasing connectivity of postal operations, and establishing the next generation national broadband connectivity
- II. The Frequency Spectrum Standard Platform and Public Services Program focuses on increasing the radio frequency spectrum and quality in the implementation of public services such as postal and ICT
- III. The ICT Implementation program which focuses on increasing ICT utilization in business and the economy, developing a smart digital community, and supporting the digitization of regional governments.
- IV. The Public Communications Program which focuses on increasing the quality of information management and public communication and finally the
- V. Management support program which focuses on establishing a good and efficient governance system.

Philippines

Location

The Philippines is in Southeast Asia (13°00 N, 122° E), located between the Philippine Sea and the South China Sea, east of Vietnam (World FactBook, 2021). It is made up of 7,107 islands and a total land area of approximately 300,000 sq Km and a coastline of 36,000 Km. The country is grouped into three main geographical areas; the large island of Luzon in the North which includes the capital Manila; the large island of Mindanao in the South; and several islands between them known as the Visayas.

Population

The current population of the Philippines is estimated at 119,141,749 people with an annual growth rate of **1.3%** which translates to about 2

million people added annually. The wider Metropolitan Manila area which is made up of 17 cities and municipalities has a total overall population of 12.8 million people (World Population Renew, 2021) With the largest urban area having an estimated population of 21.3 million. While the population density across the country is 394 persons per sq Km, the population density in Manila is estimated at 42,857 persons per sq KM which makes it the World's most densely populated city. The majority of Filipinos **55.4%** live in urban areas, a figure which has been on a steady incline in the past decade.

Like Indonesia, the Philippines is also characterized by a young population. About **30.34%** of the population is between 0 and 14 years old. The population has a median age of

24.1 years. Females represent **49.2%** of the total population. Growth rate in the last decade has been relatively slower evidenced by declining fertility rates partly due to the increased use of contraceptives and modern family planning methods.

Youth Employment, Livelihoods and Education

The youth employment rate in The Philippines currently stands at **93.12%** a significant improvement in employment rates post-COVID-19 which saw underemployment rates increase to **11.3%**, where over **60%** of the youth population between 15 and 24 out of the labor force. Youth unemployment rates also varied across regions (Ben, 2023). In general, females are less likely to have formal work arrangements compared to men, a situation more pronounced among youth (The World Bank, 2024). The services sector represents the top employer of youth with a share of **59%** of the total youth employment (Federal Reserve Economic Data, 2023).

Youth education outcomes in the Philippines continue to lag in comparison to other countries in the region; the country ranks **108 out of 183** member countries in the **Youth Development Index** and ranks 103 in youth education. The Asian Development Bank, ADB, estimates that secondary education will be the highest educational attainment for most youth who will forgo school for work. The tertiary enrollment rate for college-aged Filipino youth is only **45%**, limiting opportunities for those who do not pursue higher education and even when they do, **30%** of those who have completed a college degree encounter difficulty in finding employment. The level of education is the single most important barrier Filipinos face in terms of human capital (Motte-Munoz, 2020)

Digital Infrastructure

As seen in other countries, the COVID-19 pandemic led to the acceleration and re-prioritization of digital transformation in all sectors in The Philippines. Despite progress made in building digital infrastructure in the country, progress is still slow compared to other countries in the region; globally, the Philippines ranks 101 out of 174 in terms of digital connectivity. As at early 2024, there were 86.98 million internet users in the Philippines, reflecting an internet

penetration rate of **73.6%**. the digital infrastructure ecosystem in the Philippines is characterized by

- High mobile phone penetration rates: **99%** of internet users use mobile phones and smartphones to access the internet while **62%** access the internet via computers. Internet speed also varies based on device connectivity type with fixed and mobile internet having median download speeds of about 92.2 Mbps and 30 Mbps respectively (Statista 2024).
- Private sector-led digital infrastructure with a growing number of firms investing in building data centers. The country has about 10 data centers that offer cloud services, connectivity services, and security systems. Key internet service providers in the country include DITO, Converge, Globe, and PLDT
- High use of social media; The Philippines currently ranks second for the use of social media and active social media accounts. **73%** of the total population comprised active user identities, spending approximately **40%** of their total internet time on social media exceeding the global benchmark on social media use primarily t: (i) research potential purchases, (ii) work-related activities and (iii) read stories (Philippines Digital Report, 2023)
- Government investment in digital infrastructure projects to boost broadband connection in rural areas; this includes completing the national fiber backbone and building Wi-Fi sites across the country, particularly in Mindanao where internet connectivity is lowest (Gigi, 2024)

Digital Policy Framework

The Government of the Philippines (GoP) is committed to driving significant economic and social change through two key strategic policy frameworks; (i) the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 (PDP), and (ii) the overarching vision of AmBisyon Natin 2040 (iii) NAST's Pagtanaw 2050 and

- I. The Philippine Development Plan places a strategic focus on digital transformation, aiming to enhance service delivery, digitalize transactions, strengthen data privacy and sharing, and foster an

inclusive, innovative, and resilient financial sector. The plan also aims to create high-quality jobs in digital services for young people, cultivate a highly skilled digital workforce, and boost the contribution of e-commerce to the national GDP. These initiatives are anticipated to advance inclusivity and empowerment, particularly for women. (The World Bank, 2023)

- II. NAST's Pagtanaw 2050 identified digital technology or ICT as one of the 12 key operational areas to achieve various

national goals articulated in the country's medium- and long-term plans.

- III. The National ICT Development Agenda aims to provide ICT strategic direction aligned to the country's local and international commitments and directives of the current administration. The plan focuses on digital connectivity, digital transformation, digital inclusivity, ICT resiliency and sustainability, strategic partnerships, and digital ecosystem development.

Regional Contexts

The deployment of digital tools in youth economic empowerment projects across various regions has revealed several distinct insights and themes that are crucial for the success of digital SOYEE initiatives. To gain a comprehensive understanding of these insights, we conducted three regional calls with selected Plan International SOYEE colleagues from different countries within each region. These calls provided an overview of the digital infrastructures across the four global regions where Plan International operates: Asia Pacific (APAC), Middle East, East and Southern Africa (MEESA), Region of Americas (ROA), and West and Central Africa (WACA).

The specific objectives of these regional calls were: (1) to obtain a detailed overview of the country and regional contexts concerning SOYEE digital interventions, and (2) to deepen our understanding of specific projects, both with and without digital components, within each region. These discussions highlighted both shared and region-specific key themes and insights essential for shaping the design, implementation, and sustainability of digital programs aimed at empowering young people.

1. Importance of Robust and Strategic Partnerships

The role of partnerships varies across regions. In **WACA**, partnerships with international organizations are key to advancing digital projects, often relying heavily on external support to compensate for infrastructure gaps. In contrast, **MEESA** leverages partnerships with universities and private companies to develop local curricula and digital tools, reflecting a greater focus on capacity-building within the region. **APAC** and **ROA**, however, emphasize partnerships that ensure the sustainability of programs, focusing on long-term collaboration with local and national institutions to ensure continuity and adaptability of digital tools.

2. Critical Role of Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is a recurring theme across regions but with varying levels of urgency. **WACA** faces a

significant digital literacy gap, particularly in rural areas, which limits youth participation in digital initiatives. The focus here is on bridging this gap through tailored programs. In contrast, **MEESA** and **APAC** regions are more advanced in digital skills development, but they stress the need for continuous and up-to-date training to meet evolving market demands. **ROA**, on the other hand, emphasizes the integration of digital literacy with other key skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and financial literacy, ensuring a holistic approach to youth development.

3. Sustainability and Scalability of Digital Solutions

While sustainability and scalability are concerns across regions, their approaches differ. In **WACA**, the priority is ensuring adaptability of digital solutions to a constantly changing environment.

For **MEESA** and **APAC**, the focus is on creating financial models that can support digital initiatives over the long term, whereas **ROA** emphasizes building stronger infrastructure to support scaling, particularly in rural and remote areas where access to digital tools remains limited.

4. Inclusion and User-Centered Design

Inclusivity is more of a challenge in certain regions. For instance, in **WACA** and **ROA**, digital tools must be designed to cater to vulnerable and marginalized populations who often lack access to the resources needed to benefit from these programs. **APAC**, while addressing inclusivity, places more emphasis on user-centered design, ensuring that digital tools are culturally relevant and tailored to the specific needs of local communities, particularly in rural areas. **MEESA**, on the other hand, emphasizes gender inclusivity, ensuring that young women are not left behind in digital transformation efforts.

5. Infrastructure Development

The infrastructure challenges vary considerably across regions. **MEESA** and **ROA** are significantly hindered by a lack of internet access and electricity, which limits the reach of digital projects. **APAC**, while more advanced in digital infrastructure, notes the need to expand high-speed internet connectivity to underserved areas. In **WACA**, the focus is on improving basic infrastructure, such as affordable devices and internet connectivity, especially in rural and conflict-affected areas, where infrastructure is more fragile.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation for Continuous Improvement

The need for robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks is shared across regions, but approaches differ. **MEESA** focuses on building local capacity for M&E to ensure long-term success, while **WACA** stresses the importance of

continuous evaluation to ensure scalability and adaptability. **APAC** is focused on using M&E data to drive decision-making, particularly to inform program adjustments in rapidly changing markets. **ROA's** priority is ensuring accountability and transparency, particularly in cross-sectoral projects where multiple stakeholders are involved.

7. Community Involvement and Ownership

While community involvement is important in all regions, the level of involvement differs. **MEESA** places significant emphasis on active community engagement to ensure programs meet local needs, particularly in rural areas. **APAC**, meanwhile, highlights the role of community buy-in as essential for long-term program success, particularly in areas where trust in digital interventions is still developing. **WACA** stresses the importance of local ownership, especially in conflict-affected areas where community trust is fragile and programs need to be culturally aligned to succeed.

8. Focus on Soft Skills and Comprehensive Training

The importance of soft skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, assertiveness, and teamwork, is highlighted across all regions. The focus on soft skills is strong across regions, but the priorities vary. In **WACA**, there is an emphasis on comprehensive programs that integrate soft skills with technical training to address gaps in both rural and urban areas. **MEESA** takes a holistic approach by combining soft skills development with workforce readiness programs in collaboration with the private sector. In **APAC**, the focus is on ensuring that training programs are culturally relevant and family-inclusive, while **ROA** prioritizes building technical expertise across sectors to strengthen the local workforce's ability to implement innovative solutions.



2. Methodology

2.1. Design evaluation methods (Research design)

In conducting this evaluation, the research team adopted a rigorous feminist approach which centers around inclusivity, empowerment and reflexivity. This approach was adopted to ensure a nuanced understanding of the project's impact, particularly on young women, to critically examine the power dynamics within the program design and implementation and to ensure that these solutions do not inadvertently reinforce existing gender inequalities. The evaluation also employed a mixed-methods approach, combining structured desk reviews and case study analyses, followed by primary data collection through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs).



To gain a comprehensive understanding of digital SOYEE solutions, we purposefully selected a sample of twelve projects from Plan International's program library based on their integration of digital solutions. These projects encompassed a wide range of contexts and digital implementation strategies, ensuring geographical and thematic diversity.

2.2. Data collection and analysis methods

Data collection occurred in three phases;

1. Desk Study
2. Case Study Analysis
3. Primary Data Collection

2.2.1. Desk study

To gain a comprehensive understanding of digital SOYEE solutions, Plan International provided a sample of 12 projects from its program library for review. These projects were purposefully selected based on their integration of digital solutions.

The desk review involved a systematic process of data extraction to assess the effectiveness and impact of digital SOYEE projects. Key focus areas included alignment with Plan International's evaluation criteria, gender equality focus, and analysis of digital components.

Data on project alignment was extracted by comparing project documents against the established evaluation criteria. To assess the gender equality focus, information on women's empowerment and participation was gathered from project reports and evaluations. Digital components were identified and

analyzed through a detailed examination of project documentation, including implementation plans. Below are the 12 projects that were analysed:

- Wired4work! YES! Digital Ecosystem Philippines and Indonesia
- Tech Muda Project Indonesia
- Fit for Future Vietnam
- Saksham PLUS India
- Smart Up Factory Ethiopia and Ghana
- Project Digitalisation and e-banking for savings groups Benin
- Affordable Internet Access and Life Skills for Youth in Koforidua, Ghana
- Hope Together Egypt
- PASEWAY Ethiopia
- Young People Lead Stabilization Efforts in the Lake Chad Basin, Nigeria
- Skills Development and Employment Promotion among Youth, Rwanda
- Bridges to the Future, Indonesia and Vietnam

A detailed evaluation of Plan International's digital SOYEE solutions was conducted to assess the effectiveness of digital tools in achieving project goals. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of project outcomes and participant experiences.

By comparing project outcomes and analyzing the role of digital components, the evaluation identified strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. This analysis aimed to understand how digital interventions could be optimized to enhance youth employment and entrepreneurship.

The analysis identified "**Young People Lead Stabilization Efforts in the Lake Chad Basin**" and "**Wired4Work!**" as high-impact projects demonstrating effective digital integration. Conversely, the project "**Hope Together (Phase II) - Egypt**" highlighted areas for improvement.

2.2.2. Case Study Analysis

Following a desk review, a rubric with criteria based on the Evaluation criteria, Gender Transformative approaches, and Building Blocks was developed.² This rubric was then used to conduct a case study analysis of the projects. The **top two projects**, **Wired4Work!** Indonesia/Philippines and **Young People Lead Stabilization Efforts** in the Lake Chad Basin - Nigeria, emerged from this assessment, along with one project identified for further development, **Hope Together I - Egypt**. A heatmap was subsequently created to visually represent these results.

Despite the merits of the '**Young People Lead Stabilization Efforts**' project in Nigeria, its primary focus on peacebuilding, stabilization, and livelihoods did not directly align with SOYEE's core objectives. Limited capacity at the time and the lack of a dedicated focal point in Nigeria further hindered its feasibility.

Similarly, Plan International, committed to selecting projects that best contribute to SOYEE's goals, opted not to move forward with the '**Hope Together I**' project in Egypt. However, data collection for the **Wired4Work** project proceeded in both the Philippines and Indonesia. The criteria that was used is given below:

² A numerical scoring rubric was developed by integrating key elements from Plan International's Evaluation Criteria, gender transformative approach, digital components, and building blocks.

1. Evaluation Criteria

- **Purpose:** To ensure that digital solutions align with best practices in digital development and effectively meet the needs of young people.
- **Key Elements:** Assess digital solutions based on their:
 - **Relevance:** Alignment with the needs of the youth and Plan International's strategic objectives.
 - **Effectiveness:** Impact on skill development and facilitation of access to wage and self-employment opportunities.
 - **Coherence:** How well all aspects of the program work together seamlessly to achieve the desired outcomes.
 - **Scalability:** Ability to replicate successful interventions in different contexts or expand them to benefit a wider audience.
 - **Sustainability:** Long-term viability of solutions beyond the initial period of support.

2. Gender Transformative Approach (GTA):

- **Purpose:** To ensure that the digital solutions align with the gender transformative approach.
- **Key Components:** Examine digital solutions through the elements of the GTA:
 - **Gender norms:** Challenge traditional gender roles and ensure equal participation and opportunities for all genders.
 - **Agency:** Empower participants to make informed choices and take control of their lives, particularly for marginalized groups.
 - **Condition and position:** Address inequalities and improve the social and economic status of participants, especially women and marginalized communities.
 - **Working with boys and men:** Engage boys and men as allies in promoting gender equality and addressing harmful behaviors and attitudes.
 - **Diversity:** Cater to the needs of diverse groups, including marginalized youth, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities, ensuring inclusivity and representation.
 - **Enabling environment:** Create a supportive and safe environment for participants to access and benefit from technology, fostering a culture of respect, diversity, and inclusion.
 - **Engagement:** Engage participants throughout the project, considering communication channels, feedback mechanisms, and opportunities for involvement in decision-making.

2.2.3 Sampling and Primary Data Collection

Respondents were purposively sampled to allow for participant diversity of opinions and experiences. In selecting participants, the following factors were put into consideration; gender, with a particular focus on including young women, age, socioeconomic background and location. Partner organizations were purposely selected for key informant interviews. **In the Philippines**, key informants from the Public Employment Service Office (PESO), Pag-Asa Youth Association of the Philippines (PYAP), and the City Social Welfare and Development (CSWD) were interviewed. **In Indonesia**, the Red Nose Foundation, implementation partner, served as the primary partner for key informant interviews.

Primary data collection to gain deeper insights into the project's implementation and impact was conducted over a two-week period. This involved key informant interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders. These stakeholders included youth participants, Plan International staff, partners, and private sector organizations/employers. Prior to data collection, the evaluation team, in consultation with Plan International, developed relevant tools including interview and FGD guides tailored specifically to each respondent group. This approach helped capture a wide range of perspectives on the SOYEE digital solutions and their impact.

We conducted 7 key informant interviews and 5 focus group discussions for the Wired4Work project in the Philippines and Indonesia. The KIIs were individual interviews with key stakeholders involved in the project, while the FGDs were group discussions aimed at gathering various perspectives from stakeholders. Among the KIIs, we conducted one interview with a young woman in Indonesia, and three interviews with young women in the Philippines. Additionally, we conducted one interview with a private sector representative in Indonesia, and three interviews with young women in the Philippines.

Of the **5 FGDs**, one with young women in Indonesia included 2 participants, while the FGD with young women in the Philippines involved 4 participants. The FGD with Plan International staff in Indonesia included 3 participants, and the one with Plan International staff in the Philippines involved 4 participants. Lastly, the FGD with private sector employers included 4 participants.

The table below presents the number of participants who were involved in KIIs and FGDs in the Philippines and Indonesia:

Stakeholders	Number of participants			
	Indonesia		Philippines	
	KIIs	FGDs	KIIs	FGDs
Young women	1	2	3	4
Plan International staff	-	3	-	4
Partners	1	-	3	-
Private sector/Employer	-	4	1	-
Total participants	2	9	7	8

2.2.4. Data entry and processing methods

A feminist intersectionality lens which acknowledges the diverse experiences of participants particularly the women guided the data analysis process. This approach allowed the evaluation team to delve deeper into how factors like gender, socioeconomic background, disability, ethnicity, and geographic location may influence participant experiences. Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs were analyzed using Atlas.ti, a software program that facilitates thematic analysis grounded in feminist principles. Transcripts from interviews were coded in line with key themes related to gender equality and empowerment outcomes for young women and marginalized groups.

2.3. Limitations of the Evaluation

This study encountered several challenges that may have influenced the findings. Technical difficulties, such as unreliable internet connections and the absence of key personnel during interviews, necessitated audio recording interviews using a mobile device. This process compromised data quality due to poor audio recordings, potentially impacting the accuracy of the information gathered.

Additionally the decision to conduct a case study analysis on a single project, rather than the initially planned three, constrained the scope of the study. While the evaluation considered the documentation for a broader range of projects, this focused approach may have limited the generalizability of the findings and hindered the identification of more comprehensive patterns and trends.

Furthermore, the relatively small sample size of young women participants, a key population for this study, restricted the statistical power of the analysis and potentially limited the ability to identify nuanced patterns and trends within this group. A larger sample size would have allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of young women.

Finally, challenges in accessing key stakeholders, particularly within the private sector in Indonesia, hindered the study's ability to fully capture the perspectives of private sector representatives that were involved in the Wired4Work project. This limitation prevented a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact from the private sector's viewpoint.

2.4. Ethical Considerations

The evaluation of Plan International's SOYEE digital solutions was conducted with a strong emphasis on ethical principles. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, including young women, Plan International staff, private sector employers and partners. For youth participants, age-appropriate consent forms were utilized to ensure full comprehension of the study's purpose, data usage, and their right to withdraw at any time.

Respect for participants was fundamental to the evaluation process. Safe spaces were created for open dialogue, and power dynamics, particularly with youth participants, were carefully considered. Sensitive topics were approached with sensitivity to avoid causing discomfort.

Plan International maintained rigorous data management protocols to safeguard participant information. All data was handled and stored securely, adhering to organizational standards for data protection.

To bridge the gap between researchers and young participants, youth researchers were involved in the data collection process. This approach fostered trust and open communication, allowing for a deeper understanding of youth perspectives.

3. Findings of the Digital SOYEE Evaluation

3.1. Introduction

This section of the evaluation report provides a comprehensive analysis of the findings from 12 diverse projects implemented under the digital SOYEE initiative. These projects, spanning across various regions and targeting marginalized youth, particularly young women, aimed to enhance employability, economic empowerment, and social inclusion through innovative digital interventions and vocational training. This report synthesizes the outcomes, effectiveness, and scalability of these projects, highlighting key successes, challenges, and lessons learned to inform future efforts in youth empowerment and digital inclusion.

3.2. Overview Findings of Sampled Projects

Wired4Work! – Yes! Digital Ecosystem

The **Wired4Work!** initiative in Indonesia and the Philippines focused on empowering marginalized youth, particularly young women, through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) delivered via innovative digital platforms. In Indonesia, the project employed e-learning models, integrating them into government and private sector frameworks. During the pandemic in 2020, the initiative successfully trained 3,560 young people (**56%** of them women) were trained, 809 young people (**51%** women) found jobs and 286 young people resumed their education. In the Philippines, the YES! Academy digital platform facilitated scalable digital solutions, 2,383 project participants, 758 are female participants transitioned into employment. Both countries adapted to the challenges posed by COVID-19, transitioning to blended and entirely digital training methods, which successfully enhanced the employability and entrepreneurship capacity of the participants.

Tech Muda I

Tech Muda I targeted the high unemployment rates among Indonesian youth, especially young women, by providing IT and employability skills in

Indonesia. The project was highly effective, with about **73%** of participants securing employment. Utilizing platforms like YES! Academy, Google Forms, and Zoom, the project delivered interactive learning, which was complemented by mentorship programs and virtual job fairs for 150 youth, **80%** women, and amongst them **7 participants with a disability**. The initiative not only addressed gender disparities in the IT sector but also laid the foundation for sustained impact through the training of instructors and the establishment of alumni networks.

Fit for the Future

In Vietnam, the Fit for the Future project aimed to enhance workforce readiness among disadvantaged youth, with a particular focus on young women in the IT sector. The project successfully integrated digital tools and e-learning platforms to deliver IT vocational training, aligning with Vietnam's national strategy for digital development. The number of young people trained were 1,210. **63%** of learners were female, and 69% of the graduates reported improved job abilities after training. More than **74.6%** of the graduates reported integrating soft skills taught in training to their lives and employment. Despite the pandemic, the project efficiently utilized digital

platforms to ensure continuous delivery of training, leading to significant progress in involving women in IT roles and supporting economic empowerment.

Saksham PLUS

Saksham PLUS focused on enabling disadvantaged youth in India, particularly young women, to secure decent employment or pursue entrepreneurship. The project incorporated digital literacy into vocational training using platforms like Google Classroom and WhatsApp, which enhanced the participants' employability and learning outcomes. The project achieved a high success ratio in terms of the number of trained candidates who are placed or self-employed compared to various vocational skilling programs across India. Specifically, over **70%** of the trained JOVT (Job Oriented Vocational Training) candidates (2,302 out of 3,221) have secured placements, while **81%** of the trained VTEP (Vocational Training for Entrepreneurship Promotion) candidates (620 out of 765) have become self-employed. Strong partnerships with local vocational training centers and government programs ensured the sustainability of these interventions, while the gender-sensitive approach promoted equality and inclusivity.

The Smart-Up Project

The Smart-Up Project created youth-friendly spaces in Ethiopia and Uganda, providing marginalized youth with training and mentorship to develop their skills. **In Ethiopia**, the focus was on utilizing digital tools to distribute educational materials and support social entrepreneurship. The project targeted 980 young people, including **60%** girls and young women and **40%** boys and young men. Of this, 400 young people graduated successfully, and **56%** of the participants continued their studies, with **31.3%** finding work (**39%** men and **26%** women). Furthermore, **25%** of participants created their own firms, and more than **94.9%** of the participants believed they were treated equally regardless of gender. **In Uganda**, the expansion of centers allowed for broader reach, effectively empowering young women

through leadership and skills development. During the project, **91%** of the young participants, including **84.7%** of girls, were consistently engaged in the provided spaces. Furthermore, **95.5%** of the participants, especially young women, demonstrated new or improved skills after training, significantly contributing to their personal development. While the project aimed to link **70%** of participants to employment and business opportunities, it achieved **56%** due to challenges related to COVID-19 and funding limitations. The financial efficiency of the project was marked by a **90%** budget utilization rate, and gender inclusion efforts saw **75%** of the project staff being women. Both projects were highly relevant and demonstrated potential for scalability within and beyond their respective regions.

Digitalization and E-Banking for Savings Groups in the municipalities of Dogbo and Klouékanmè

This project improved financial inclusion among young people in Benin. By offering mobile phones and digital financial literacy training, the project enabled participants to better manage their funds and gain access to financial services. Strong engagement with local financial institutions enabled the initiative's long-term viability and scalability. Approximately 50 savings groups were using digital services and **85%** of the young women used digital services for savings and credit transactions, with Klouékanmè showing greater percentages than Dogbo. Members who could utilize a phone for savings collection and credit repayment had risen dramatically, from **24.8%** to **58.8%** as over **81%** of the young women were comfortable using mobile phones for financial transactions. Also, **93.2%** of participants felt that the project had a positive impact on their lives. At the end, the project had attained a success rating of **95.8%**.

This project's key learnings include the value of targeted training, effective collaborations, and a gender-responsive strategy. By incorporating these findings into future programs, Plan International can broaden its reach, promote gender equality, and enhance the lives of

vulnerable communities through digital financial inclusion.

Affordable Internet Access & Life Skills for Youth in Koforidua

In Ghana, this project aimed to improve internet access and ICT skills among youth, particularly those in technical and vocational education. The installation of a solar-powered Wi-Fi network and the deployment of a local cloud platform facilitated widespread access to digital educational materials. The project's focus on digital literacy led to better learning outcomes and economic empowerment, with the infrastructure and training models developed showing potential for replication in other regions.

The project's success was due to several best practices. First, involving local residents in planning and implementation, ensured the participants who met their specific needs. Second, using solar power for the Wi-Fi network provided a reliable and sustainable source of energy. Third, combining internet access with digital skills training offered a comprehensive solution to address the digital divide. Finally, partnering with local organizations strengthened the project's impact and sustainability. However, the project also revealed some challenges. Despite improved internet access, not everyone had equal opportunities, particularly those in marginalized communities. Maintaining the project's infrastructure over the long term required ongoing support. Despite these challenges, the project's model can be adapted and replicated in other areas to promote digital inclusion and economic opportunities.

Key statistics revealed that access to functioning internet connectivity for learning improved notably; male participants' access rose from **61%** at baseline to **82.6%** at the end-line, while female participants' access increased from **46%** to **52.3%**. The primary means of accessing the internet included smartphones (**77.8%**) and personal laptops (**9.9%**). Furthermore, approximately **18.8%** of out-of-school young people secured jobs through the internet

connectivity and training module, a significant increase from a baseline of **0%**. Female participants represented a slightly higher percentage (**19.2%**) compared to males (**18.2%**).

Hope Together (Phase II)

Hope Together in Egypt sought to improve the economic self-reliance and social integration of Syrian refugees and vulnerable Egyptians. The project successfully used digital platforms like WhatsApp and Zoom for training and mentorship, fostering economic independence and social cohesion. The skills and networks developed are likely to continue benefiting participants, with the project's adaptable training models being suitable for replication in similar contexts. Approximately, **18.9%** of the program participants reported being capable of providing for both their personal and their family's expenses. More than half of the participants, (**54.8%**), could correctly identify what a market study entails, yet only **16.8%** owned an income-generating business. Also, **19.68%** reported having access to financial services within the last six months.

At the end of the project, 1,350 participants were trained on technical and life skills for self-employment, contributing to their economic self-reliance and social integration resulting in the creation of approximately 1205.7 jobs. The average income for Egyptians increased by **55.7%**, and for Syrians, it increased by **58%** after the project. To enhance the effectiveness of the project, a few best practices should be considered. Gender-sensitive programming is vital, with tailored interventions to address barriers that women face in accessing project benefits.

Additionally, strengthening data security is crucial for safeguarding participants' personal information, requiring improved protection measures like encryption, regular audits, and clear data protocols. The advocacy efforts should continue to focus on promoting inclusive work environments by engaging businesses and policymakers to support the employment of refugees and vulnerable groups.

PASEWAY

The PASEWAY project in Ethiopia focused on enhancing the employability of urban youth through vocational training and entrepreneurship support. Despite challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, the project efficiently used digital tools to deliver training, resulting in significant improvements in the employability and economic status of participants. The establishment of business incubation centers and strong local partnerships are expected to sustain the project's impacts. The analysis highlighted that **92%** of surveyed youths were employed, with **67.4%** in wage employment and **24.6%** self-employed, surpassing the target of 1,470 wage placements by achieving **71%** of that goal. The project trained 2,271 young people, primarily women, in various skills, notably garment making and kitchen operations, which led to increased self-confidence and positive attitudes towards employment opportunities. Additionally, 584 youths formed cooperatives or savings groups, enhancing their access to financial resources. Despite successes, challenges such as the impact of COVID-19 and the preference for wage employment over self-employment were noted. The evaluation underscored the project's alignment with national development goals and its effectiveness in improving livelihoods through targeted training and support for entrepreneurship, while also identifying sustainability concerns for long-term impact.

Young People Lead Stabilization Efforts in the Lake Chad Basin

This project in **Nigeria** empowered young people, particularly females, to participate in peacebuilding and community development. The use of digital tools for monitoring and advocacy significantly enhanced youth participation in peacebuilding activities, fostering peaceful coexistence and community decision-making. The project's digital frameworks have strong potential for scalability and adaptation in other conflict-affected regions. After the project, **70%** of the young participants (Female: **37%**, Male: **33%**) were satisfied with the map-based platform,

66.5% (Female: **27%**, Male: **39%**) felt successful in influencing decision-making, **75%** reported generating profit from their businesses due to the loan, and **98.18%** expressed high satisfaction with the YSLA operation in their community.

Skills Development and Employment Promotion Among Youth (SDEPAY)

SDEPAY in **Rwanda** aimed to reduce youth unemployment by providing vocational training and support for employment and self-employment. The project effectively utilized digital tools like the Open Data Kit (ODK) for data collection, enhancing the efficiency and impact of training programs. The gender-sensitive approach ensured equal access to training, empowering female youth and promoting gender equality in employment. By the end of the project, 1,206 youth participants had completed training. Indirectly, over 10,000 family members also benefited from the project's interventions. The project's emphasis on gender equality and inclusivity was evident throughout the evaluation process, with a focus on empowering young women and marginalized groups.

Bridges to the Future

Bridges to the Future targeted youth unemployment exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic in **Indonesia and Vietnam**. The project provided vocational training and job-matching solutions, with a focus on supporting disadvantaged youth, particularly women and migrants. The use of online platforms extended the project's reach, and the strong partnerships with local institutions ensured the sustainability and scalability of the interventions. The project successfully trained 1,210 young people in short-term vocational programs, surpassing the target of 1,120, with **63%** of the participants being female. Of the 5,210 young people who benefited from the project, 1,400 found jobs, with an average time of 1.2 months to secure employment post-training. Additionally, their income increased by nearly **20%**, with wages rising from 4.25 million VND to 5 million VND per month. In terms of soft skills, all 5,210 trainees received training,

exceeding the initial target by **8.5%**, and **37%** of them were young women. Lastly, **98.1%** of the trainees found that the vocational training content

and duration aligned with actual job requirements, and 74.6% were able to apply the soft skills they learned in their work.

3.3. Overall Findings Against Evaluation Criteria

Relevance

The analysis of **12 projects** reveals several consistent themes demonstrating how these initiatives effectively addressed the relevance of youth needs in various contexts. A key element across all projects was the strategic alignment with the specific needs of youth, particularly in skill development, employability, and digital literacy. This alignment ensured that the projects were not only impactful but also deeply relevant to their target audiences.

Digital solutions played a pivotal role in Digital SOYEE projects by harnessing digital platforms to provide IT training for disadvantaged youth, particularly in graphic design and web coding. One notable initiative is **Wired4Work!** - YES! Digital Ecosystems, which utilized the YES! Academy platform to offer various e-learning courses. This approach allowed for remote learning, ensuring that young people could access vocational training even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, the **Tech Muda I** project leveraged online training tools to teach web development skills, including website creation through WordPress, thereby enhancing the digital competencies of participants.

Another significant project is **Saksham Plus**, which also employed the YES! Academy platform to facilitate ongoing learning opportunities. This initiative focused on practical skills such as digital marketing and IT project management. Additionally, the **Fit for the Future** project utilized online classes to improve workforce readiness among disadvantaged youth, with a particular emphasis on young women entering the IT sector.

Gender inclusivity emerged as a significant theme, with all projects focusing on empowering young women. Projects that addressed gender disparities by equipping women with the digital

skills needed to participate in the digital economy. These projects were particularly relevant in contexts where women faced disproportionate challenges, such as job losses during the pandemic.

Economic resilience and financial inclusion were also key focus areas. The **Hope Together Phase II** project intended to improve the economic self-sufficiency of 2,000 Syrian refugees and vulnerable Egyptian citizens. This initiative offered technical and life skills training, as well as cash subsidies, to help people start sustainable enterprises. As a result, Egyptian recipients' average monthly income grew from 1,528 EGP prior to the project to 2,380 EGP following its implementation, representing a **55.7%** increase. Similarly, Syrian project participants saw their average income rise from 1,777 EGP to 2,809 EGP, a **58%** increase.

Another notable example is the integration of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) into the project structure. These organizations promoted financial inclusion and pushed members to save and invest in their businesses. For example, members reported large savings throughout their participation in the program, allowing them to enhance their revenue from various economic activities. Specific success stories include project participants who were able to develop their enterprises or invest in their children's education as a result of the greater money generated by these programs. Such instances demonstrate how digital SOYEE programs effectively promote financial inclusion and economic resilience among young people, ultimately achieving the broader goal of enhancing access to jobs and sustainable earnings.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic was another recurring theme. Projects like **Wired4Work! YES! Digital Ecosystem** in the Philippines adapted their delivery methods to ensure continued learning and employment opportunities despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. The project adapted its delivery methods during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure continued learning and employment opportunities. The project incorporated a blended learning approach, using both face-to-face and online platforms like **YES!Academy** to facilitate training. When lockdowns restricted in-person sessions, the project shifted to online learning, allowing participants to continue their education. In areas with limited internet access, the project set up learning hubs and used assisted online learning to ensure that even those without digital access could participate. This adaptability was critical in maintaining engagement and ensuring that the projects remained relevant during a global crisis.

Coherence

Coherence in the 12 digital SOYEE projects is evident in their shared focus on Plan International's strategic objectives. A central theme across all projects was the strong alignment with the organization's goals of youth empowerment, gender equality, and digital inclusion. By focusing on these strategic priorities, the projects ensured that their outcomes directly supported broader organizational aims.

Youth empowerment emerged as a core element in projects such as **Wired4Work!, Tech Muda I, Saksham PLUS, and Pathways for Sustainable Employment for Women and Youth (PASEWAY)**. These initiatives targeted marginalized youth, equipping them with vocational and digital skills necessary for employability and entrepreneurship. This consistent focus on empowering young people underlines a shared commitment across the projects to support sustainable economic growth among youth.

The projects also maintained coherence in addressing gender equality, a key strategic

However, the **Fit for the Future** project faced several key issues regarding its relevance. These included limited alignment with FPOLY's (FPT Polytechnic College) structure and resources, a private institution not traditionally focused on disadvantaged students, because the structure/resources of FPOLY's training model are unlikely to change to continue these models, especially in the big city such as Hanoi, where the majority of students coming from better-off households. Gender-specific challenges, particularly in rural areas, were difficult to fully address, as cultural norms and resource gaps, exacerbated during COVID-19, limited female participation. Additionally, there was a mismatch between the soft skills like proactiveness and working attitude emphasized by employers and those developed through the project, indicating a need for more focus on non-technical skills.

objective of Plan International. For example, **Saksham PLUS, SmartUp Factory Scale-up, and Bridges to the Future/Pathways to Jobs** emphasized the inclusion of young women, working to reduce gender-based barriers in education and employment. This commitment to gender inclusivity was evident across all initiatives, reflecting a unified approach to promoting equal opportunities for all genders.

Digital inclusion and innovation were another consistent theme, with projects like **Digitalisation and E-banking for Savings Groups, Affordable Internet Access and Life Skills for the Youth in Koforidua, and Hope Together II** leveraging technology to extend educational and employment opportunities. By integrating digital tools such as online training platforms and virtual job fairs, the projects not only reached broader audiences but also aligned with global trends toward digital literacy. This coherence in using technology to drive inclusive development ensured that youth were prepared for the demands of a digital economy.

In conclusion, the digital SOYEE projects consistently demonstrated coherence in aligning with Plan International's strategic objectives. Through a unified focus on youth empowerment,

Effectiveness

The assessment of the 12 projects underscores their effectiveness in delivering impactful outcomes, particularly in skill development, employment creation, and youth empowerment. Each initiative demonstrated considerable success by strategically leveraging digital tools, establishing strong employment linkages, and providing targeted support to marginalized groups.

A key element driving the effectiveness of these projects was the integration of digital platforms for skill development. For example, the **Wired4Work!** projects in Indonesia and the Philippines effectively utilized e-learning models like YES! Academy to provide comprehensive vocational and technical training. This approach significantly enhanced the employability of participants by aligning the training with market demands. Similarly, the **Tech Muda I** project in Indonesia focused on IT and soft skills, resulting in a high employment rate among its graduates. The project exceeded its target by training 150 youths, with 80% of the participants being female, including 7 individuals with disabilities. Of the trainees, **73%** secured employment, achieving **93%** of the job placement target. Additionally, 30 instructors were trained in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), with a **98%** attendance rate and a **75%** increase in their knowledge of training methodologies. Participants showed substantial improvements in IT skills, particularly in web development and digital marketing, with comprehension levels between 80-100%.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, youth employment rose from **19.8%** to **73%**, while unemployment dropped from **80.2%** to **27%**. Among employed participants, **78%** were female, with **72.2%** working in the IT sector. However, post-pandemic employment rates fell to **48%**, reflecting the challenges of job stability. Despite

gender equality, and digital inclusion, these projects collectively ensured that their interventions were impactful, sustainable, and in line with the organization's broader goals.

this, **78.8%** of the employed participants retained their jobs for at least 90 days, demonstrating the project's success in improving employability. These digital strategies were crucial in delivering impactful training, directly contributing to the effectiveness of the projects.

The projects also demonstrated effectiveness in facilitating access to employment. The **Bridges to the Future/Pathways to Jobs** program in Indonesia and Vietnam, for instance, created strong linkages between training and job placement. Through organizing job fairs and forming partnerships with local businesses, the program ensured that trained youth had immediate employment opportunities. Additionally, other projects utilized virtual job fairs and digital recruitment portals, which further enhanced the transition from training to employment, solidifying the effectiveness of these initiatives in securing jobs for participants.

An example is the **Hope Together Phase II** project. The project was successful in using digital platforms to facilitate job placements for participants. During the review, it was shown that 701 participants got cash grants to start sustainable businesses, resulting in the creation of about 1,205 jobs—an average of 1.72 jobs per award. Furthermore, a substantial majority of recipients stated that their involvement in virtual job fairs and recruiting portals was critical to their job search success. Data obtained revealed that **96%** of persons interviewed had an income-generating business, with many crediting their job chances to the skills and connections developed through these digital activities. Case studies from recipients demonstrate actual outcomes: for example, one adolescent acquired a work as a web developer after visiting a virtual job fair, resulting in an increase in monthly income from 1,500 EGP to 2,500 EGP.

Another factor in the effectiveness of these projects was their focus on empowering marginalized youth, particularly young women. Projects like **SmartUp Factory** in Uganda and Ethiopia and **Digitalisation and E-banking for Savings Groups** provided targeted support to young women, addressing specific barriers and **Efficiency**

The evaluation of the 12 digital SOYEE projects reveals several consistent themes in how resources were managed efficiently to maximize impact. A central element across all projects was the strategic use of digital tools, which was crucial in cost-effectively delivering training programs. Platforms like Zoom, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and specialized tools like YES! Academy was pivotal in reducing the need for physical infrastructure by lowering costs and allowing the projects to reach a broader audience. This approach was particularly evident where digital solutions enabled efficient management of large participant groups.

The digital SOYEE projects also demonstrated strong resource management, particularly in response to external challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, several projects effectively managed its budgets while adapting its delivery methods to ensure continuity of training. This adaptability allowed these projects to maintain the quality of educational outcomes without significant additional expenditure, **Sustainability**

The sustainability of the 12 digital SOYEE projects was carefully crafted through several strategic approaches designed to ensure long-term impact and continuity beyond the life of the projects. A central element of sustainability was integrating project activities into local institutions and educational systems. For example, in the **W4W project** in Indonesia and the Philippines, efforts were made to embed training programs into the regular operations of local vocational centers and partner institutions. This integration not only ensured that the initiatives would continue but also positioned them for expansion with ongoing support from these entities. The endorsement and involvement of government bodies further

promoting gender equality. By equipping participants with marketable skills and challenging traditional gender norms, these projects effectively fostered social change and empowered participants, thereby enhancing the overall impact and success of the interventions.

highlighting its ability to navigate and overcome unforeseen challenges efficiently.

Collaboration with local stakeholders emerged as another key strategy for enhancing efficiency. Projects like **"Wired4Work! -YES! Digital Ecosystem"** leveraged partnerships with local institutions and businesses to optimize resource use and extend their reach. Similarly, by utilizing the existing infrastructure to expand their services many projects demonstrated how strategic partnerships can enhance project efficiency and effectiveness.

In conclusion, the digital SOYEE projects consistently demonstrated efficient resource management through the strategic use of digital tools, effective adaptation to challenges, collaboration with local stakeholders, scalability of interventions, strong return on investment, and innovative use of technology. These factors collectively ensured that the projects met their objectives cost-effectively and sustainably.

bolstered sustainability by aligning project goals with national policies and securing continued resource allocation.

Capacity building, mainly through Training of Trainers (ToT) programs, was another key strategy that underpinned the sustainability of these projects. By equipping local educators and mentors with the necessary skills ensured that the benefits of their training programs could be sustained and scaled over time. For example, in the **Wired4Work! YES! Digital Ecosystems**, local educators were trained to deliver life skills and vocational courses using the YES! Academy platform. Also, **Tech Muda I** project combined in-person training with digital tools like Zoom and

YES! Academy, to develop IT skills in local educators. In Vietnam, the **Fit for the Future** project enhanced workforce readiness by training local institutions such as Hanoi Industrial Vocational College (HNIVC) to continue offering educational programs independently. In India, the **Saksham Plus** project mentorship programs through YES! Academy, equipped educators with IT and web development skills by integrating ToT. This approach empowered local institutions to continue delivering high-quality education and vocational training independently, securing the long-term impact of the projects.

The creation of alumni networks and ongoing mentorship programs also emerged as a vital component of sustainability. The establishment of strong alumni networks provides continued support and mentorship to graduates. For instance, the **Saksham Plus** project combined face-to-face and online mentoring showing support for the alumni through regular communication through WhatsApp and email. In addition the **Smart-Up** project promoted peer support networks and mentoring roles in IT and system administration, helping the alumni sustain long-term career growth. For the **Hope Together Phase II** project, WhatsApp also built a community of graduates thus facilitating ongoing mentorship and peer support. These networks help maintain the momentum of skill development and facilitate employment opportunities, ensuring that the positive outcomes of the projects persist long after their conclusion.

Scalability

The scalability of the 12 digital SOYEE projects was driven by several key factors that positioned these initiatives for potential expansion and adaptation across various regions and socio-economic contexts. Based on the **Hope Together Phase II** evaluation, the project successfully involved 2,000 participants, including 1,350 Syrian refugees and 650 vulnerable Egyptian community members, indicating its large scale of operation. The review found that 701 individuals got cash grants, resulting in the creation of about

Several projects emphasized community engagement and ownership as essential for long-term success. Initiatives focused on empowering local communities by training local staff and promoting self-sufficiency. By reducing dependencies on external resources and fostering community-led development, these projects ensured that their interventions remained relevant and impactful.

For example, in the **Hope Together Phase II** project's final review, the Cairo Center for Development Benchmarking emphasized that **100%** of Egyptian project participants and **95.5%** of Syrian project participants intend to continue their businesses, demonstrating a strong commitment to retaining the project's advantages. Furthermore, **96%** of individuals reported having an operating income-generating business, suggesting that many participants successfully used skills learnt during the initiative.

Follow-up studies and evaluations were carried out to assess the long-term effectiveness of these programs. For example, **95.4%** of recipients reported greater self-reliance as a result of project-generated economic activities or abilities. The review also found that **76.3%** of project participants could meet their basic needs, which is a strong signal of long-term economic stability. While implementing sustainability measures is critical, these data provide clear evidence that many improvements have persisted beyond the project's formal completion, confirming the efficacy of the SOYEE projects' comprehensive approaches.

1,205 employments, demonstrating effective implementation and outreach. The versatility of the training models was demonstrated by their use in various circumstances. For example, programs such as **Wired4Work!** have demonstrated that their digital training frameworks can be adapted to match regional needs, allowing for greater use both locally and worldwide. The evaluation also found that recipients were highly satisfied with the training they received, with **100%** of Egyptian participants

and **97.3%** of Syrian participants reporting satisfaction with the enterprise training. These findings provide clear evidence that the digital SOYEE projects' scalability and adaptability have been successfully shown through significant participant involvement and favorable outcomes in a variety of socioeconomic circumstances.

However, the scalability of these projects also faced potential risks and challenges, particularly in regions with limited digital infrastructure. Issues such as inconsistent internet connectivity, lack of access to digital devices, and varying levels of digital literacy can impede effective implementation and participant engagement. To address these challenges, projects proactively developed hybrid models that combined digital tools with in-person training, ensuring that participants without reliable internet access could still benefit from the programs. Additionally, training sessions were tailored to enhance digital skills among participants, ensuring that they could effectively utilize the available technologies. This approach not only mitigated the risk of exclusion due to digital barriers but also empowered participants to leverage technology for future opportunities.

The success of **Tech Muda I and Affordable Internet Access and Life Skills for Youth in Koforidua** projects for example, in leveraging strategic partnerships with local educational institutions, businesses, and government bodies was another critical factor in their scalability. For instance, the capitalization of local partnerships to integrate digital tools into traditional vocational training centers and savings groups. These partnerships not only provided essential support during the initial implementation but also created a replicable model that can be expanded into other regions with similar socio-economic conditions. The **Tech Muda I** project exemplified scalability through its collaboration with local educational institutions such as Sekolah Tinggi Terpadu Nurul Fikri and private sector partners like Sibisnis and Sitcomasia. These partnerships not only provided essential support during the initial implementation but also enhanced the project's reach. By training 150 youths, with **80%**

being women, the project demonstrated a successful model that could be adapted to other regions facing similar challenges in youth employability.

Several projects also demonstrated strong potential for geographic expansion, particularly in regions with similar socio-economic conditions. For example, the project, **Tech Muda I** developed digital training modules that were easily adaptable to various contexts, allowing for geographic expansion. For instance, after initial success in Jakarta, the project replicated its training programs in other areas of Indonesia where there was a demand for IT skills. The infrastructure established, including mentorship programs and job placement strategies, served as a foundation for similar initiatives in different regions..

Another example is the **Affordable Internet Access and Life Skills for Youth in Koforidua** project which also showcased scalability through strategic partnerships with local educational institutions and government bodies. The project improved internet access and provided life skills training that could be easily replicated in other regions. The successful increase in internet connectivity **from 61% to 82.6%** for male students and from **46% to 52.3%** for female students, served as a model for similar initiatives to enhance digital access in educational settings across Ghana.

Another critical factor contributing to scalability was integrating digital and physical training models. Projects effectively combined digital tools with on-the-ground training, creating a scalable model that could be adapted to include more participants or reach new geographic areas without sacrificing effectiveness. This integration ensured that the projects' benefits could be extended to a broader audience, regardless of location.

Gender-Transformative Approach (GTA)

The digital SOYEE projects demonstrated a strong commitment to gender equality, challenging traditional norms and actively promoting the inclusion of women and girls in training and development programs. By prioritizing female participation in sectors traditionally dominated by men, such as IT and digital skills, these projects aimed to address gender disparities in education and employment. Many projects set specific gender targets, reinforcing gender equality as a core objective.

A key aspect of the GTA was the active effort to challenge and transform traditional gender norms. Several projects within the Digital SOYEE framework effectively dismantled traditional gender norms by prioritizing female participation and promoting gender equality. Notable examples include **Wired4work!** in Indonesia and Philippines, **Tech Muda I** in Indonesia, **Fit for the Future** in Vietnam, **Saksham PLUS** in India, **Hope Together II** in Egypt and the **Smart-Up Project** in Ethiopia and Uganda. These initiatives integrated gender-sensitive strategies, such as gender-sensitization workshops and life skills training, to empower young women in male-dominated sectors like IT and digital skills, successfully challenging societal expectations and fostering inclusivity. One respondent shared,

"Before I joined this program... I haven't had any job or any businesses yet... After I joined, I applied to some of the companies and through this, with the knowledge that I got from this project... The I.T. skills, the language and communication skills that I learned from this program I have the confidence to apply to some of the companies in Indonesia" Another participant noted, ***"both males and females here had equal opportunities to work anywhere, provided they are truly qualified for the position. The job requirements focus on skills, knowledge, and educational background, not gender."***

These projects demonstrate the transformative power of gender-inclusive initiatives in

empowering women and girls, challenging traditional gender roles, and creating a more equitable digital landscape.

The enhancement of women's agency and leadership was another crucial component of the GTA. Several projects focused on developing leadership skills among women, equipping them with the tools necessary to take on leadership roles within their communities and workplaces. Projects offered training not only in technical skills but also in leadership, decision-making, and financial management. This focus on leadership aimed to empower women to influence decisions, advocate for themselves, and inspire others. Additionally, the creation of role models and mentorship programs played a significant role in supporting women's empowerment. For example, several projects included mentorship components where successful female professionals provided guidance and support to participants, helping them envision themselves in leadership positions and breaking down barriers to their success.

Recognizing that achieving gender equality requires the involvement of both men and women, several projects actively engaged men and boys in gender equality efforts. Inclusive gender sensitization workshops were a feature of projects where men and boys were educated on the importance of gender equality and encouraged to support women's empowerment. By fostering an inclusive approach, these projects aimed to create allies among men and boys in the fight for gender equality. Some projects also focused on promoting positive masculinity, challenging traditional notions of manhood that contribute to gender inequality. These efforts sought to redefine masculinity in a way that supports gender equality and encourages men to be active participants in creating a more equitable society.

Ensuring the sustainability of gender-transformative outcomes was a key consideration across the projects. Several initiatives sought to institutionalize gender equality within local institutions and communities to ensure that the progress made would continue beyond the life of

the project. By working with local educational institutions to incorporate gender equality principles into their curricula and operations these digital SOYEE projects embedded these values into the fabric of local education systems. Additionally, some projects supported the development of community-led gender equality initiatives that would continue to promote women's empowerment and gender equality after the projects concluded. These initiatives were designed to be self-sustaining, driven by local leaders and participants who had been empowered through the projects.

Overall, the Gender-Transformative Approach across the digital SOYEE projects was characterized by a robust commitment to promoting gender equality and challenging traditional gender norms. This was achieved through the targeted inclusion of women and girls, efforts to challenge socio-cultural barriers, the development of women's leadership skills, the engagement of men and boys in gender equality efforts, and the institutionalization of gender equality within local communities and institutions. These strategies ensured that the impacts of these projects on gender equality were both profound and enduring, creating a foundation for continued progress towards gender equity.

3.4. Deep Dive Findings on Wired4Work! – YES! Digital Ecosystem

3.4.1. Introduction

The W4W project, implemented by Plan International in Indonesia and The Philippines, integrates scalable digital solutions based on lessons from prior youth employment initiatives in Latin America and Asia. Its primary objective is to enhance the capacity of public, private, and non-profit sectors to connect young people, particularly young women, with employment opportunities to uplift their livelihoods. Notably, all 23 young women in the KIIs and FGDs were able to secure jobs as a result of participating in the project.

In Indonesia, the W4W project is deployed across Jabodetabek, Lombok, and Semarang, utilizing three Yes! Digital Ecosystem approaches: YES!HUB, YES!ACADEMY, and YES!ME. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, the project predominantly leverages the YES!ACADEMY digital system, which includes offline functionality, targeting three youth categories: (i) youth who were previously neither educated, employed or trained (NEET), (ii) Youth in high school under the technical vocational livelihood (TVL) stream and (iii) senior high school students under the digital life skills stream. Throughout its duration, the project directly or indirectly trains at least 8,400 young individuals in Indonesia and approximately 3,600 youth in The Philippines, equipping them

with market-driven technical and vocational skills crucial for securing meaningful employment. While the W4W Project has shown positive outcomes in certain areas, its effectiveness in promoting youth employment in Indonesia remains a concern. The employment status of Indonesian youth after participating in the project reveals that a significant percentage, **60.4%**, are still unemployed or not engaged in work. In contrast, only **29%** have secured jobs, and just **11%** have started their own businesses. In the Philippines, **31.8%** of young women were linked to employment opportunities within six months of completing their technical education and life skills training. Despite the project's quantitative successes, it has not sufficiently fostered job placement and employment opportunities for young women, highlighting the need for more effective strategies to support employment across both countries.

An evaluation conducted at the project's conclusion highlights its relevance to the diverse needs of young people in both countries. It effectively engages private stakeholders, particularly in The Philippines, contributing to unintended positive outcomes such as increased youth confidence. However, effectiveness varies among participants due to factors such as brief

training periods, limited partner ownership, and underutilization of Yes!Hub platforms in Indonesia. The W4W project demonstrates a robust commitment to enhancing **gender outcomes** by addressing specific needs of female participants, challenging prevailing gender stereotypes, and fostering an environment conducive to gender equality. In the Philippines, alignment with governmental youth priorities and collaboration with key private sector entities bolsters prospects for sustainability, contrasting with Indonesia where partner uptake is comparatively lower. The W4W final evaluation report for the Philippines highlights that partnerships not only expand reach and impact but also establish a foundation for sustainable practices and ongoing support for youth participants. The report further states that the collaboration among partners enabled the project to engage more participants and exceed its target numbers. Additionally, partnerships with public sector organizations allowed the project to enhance the services provided by government agencies such as the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). This collaboration also strengthened ties between

companies, schools, and the Public Employment Service Office (PESO), helping to reduce the risks of illegal recruitment, particularly for vulnerable groups like young women.

Key lessons gathered from the W4W project encompass the critical role of local partnerships in program design, implementation, and sustainability. Continuous learning and adaptation were crucial for optimizing program efficiency, while alumni engagement emerges as pivotal for participant mentorship. Additionally, barriers such as inadequate internet connectivity in certain regions poses significant challenges to participation. The W4W project underscores the importance of strategic partnerships, adaptive strategies, and targeted gender initiatives in advancing youth employment outcomes in Indonesia and the Philippines.

The sections that follow present findings and direct quotes from stakeholders, including young women, partners, private sector representatives, and Plan International staff, highlighting their experiences and perspectives on the W4W project's impact.

3.4.2 Digital Components

Digital Tools & Platforms

The W4W project demonstrates remarkable progress in incorporating digital platforms and tools tailored to enhance accessibility and improve the user experience for young women. This approach reflects a deep understanding of the local context and users' specific needs, showcasing a commitment to delivering impactful solutions.

In Indonesia, the effective integration of mobile technology is particularly notable. Many participants value the convenience of accessing educational content directly on their mobile devices. A respondent comments, **"I can access it through my smartphone so I do not need to**

use my tablet or laptop because they are big, using my smartphone is more convenient and portable..." This underscores the importance of user-friendly digital tools well-suited to the target audience's lifestyle.

In both the KIIs and FGDs in both countries, all the **23 young women** agree that the project significantly helped them in their job search efforts. A participant interviewed shares, **"The project taught us how to prepare for job interviews and make effective resumes using digital**

tools like Canva" . Additionally, the project provides crucial guidance on navigating the job market, another participant from the FGDs notes, **"Many young people use social media when searching for job vacancies. However, they do not conduct enough research or find reliable information about these jobs, and some unknowingly apply for fraudulent job postings. There are many job scams out there targeting young people, and because of a lack of awareness, they often do not recognize the risks. I learned how to choose appropriate job vacancies and how to find more information about them."** The project's ability to adapt to educational needs and enhance economic opportunities for young women by aligning digital skills with real-world applications is evident.

Similarly, in the Philippines, there is notable appreciation for the relevance and accessibility of digital platforms. An interviewee remarks, **"Nowadays, most people have mobile phones, allowing easy access to projects like the Yes! Academy"** . This comment highlights the strong foundation in digital accessibility and the project's readiness to enhance offline access, particularly for users facing connectivity challenges.

The collaboration between Plan International and partner organizations is crucial in driving digital skills development, youth employment, and entrepreneurship in Indonesia and the Philippines. These public-private partnerships (PPPs) are key in addressing gaps in TVET institutions (USAID, 2024). Digital training platforms like Yes! Academy, virtual mentorship programs, and digital job matching services play key roles in connecting young people with job opportunities and relevant training. This is integral in facilitating job matching and placement, emphasizing easy access to essential information and tools for young job seekers.

A respondent notes, **"We provided young people access to digital platforms that provide job vacancies. With the help of Plan International, we directed them to apply for jobs and utilize the Yes! Academy for suitable topics and training in line with their aspirations."**

This highlights the project's efforts to ensure accessibility to digital education and job opportunities, further supported by initiatives like establishing free Wi-Fi connections in remote areas. Another respondent states, **"We established free Wi-Fi connections, especially in mountain barangays, ensuring youth had equitable access to digital resources."**

A key success indicator is the significant reduction in facilitator support needed, highlighting the platforms' user-friendliness and participants' ability to navigate resources independently. This self-sufficiency is crucial for the sustainability and scalability of digital education and training initiatives. As a participant from the FGDs points out, **"As long as you can decrease**

the number of facilitators that support how to utilize the platform, I think it is successful because users can just check it by themselves."

The utilization of digital platforms like Yes! Academy for delivering online training and educational content is a cornerstone of the W4W project. This allows the project to offer a wide range of courses and learning modules easily accessible to participants, enabling continuous learning at the participants' own pace and enhancing the effectiveness of the training. One of the respondents describes Yes! Academy as **"a digital platform used for delivering online training and educational content."**

Digital Interventions

Digital interventions are strategically designed to enhance digital literacy and employability, showcasing significant impacts through customized approaches like online courses, social media outreach, and tools accommodating individuals with disabilities. These interventions combine tangible support with strategic engagement, as evidenced by insights from participants. For instance, a participant highlights the practical support she received, stating, **"During the project, if you enrolled in the courses in Yes! Academy, they would give us like 250 or 100 pesos for internet allowance,"**. This emphasizes how the internet allowance facilitated access to digital education platforms.

The effectiveness of these interventions is further illustrated through personal experiences. Another

participant interviewed notes, **"I first heard about the project from social media platforms."**, demonstrating how social media serves not only as an educational tool but also as a critical engagement strategy. This dual approach, combining online courses, targeted tools, and financial incentives, mirrors successful initiatives in countries like Indonesia and the Philippines. It ensures that digital opportunities reach a broader audience, particularly young women, fostering an inclusive environment for digital education.

Insights from the KIIs reveal that partners in the W4W project implements targeted digital interventions to enhance youth employability and entrepreneurial skills. These efforts align with industry demands and contribute to local economic development by addressing skills gaps in key sectors. In Indonesia, the Red Nose Foundation, renowned for its commitment to improving the lives of children and youth through arts and education in underprivileged communities, served as the primary partner for KIIs. In the Philippines, key informants included the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWD) of Davao City, which delivers essential social welfare programs; the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) of Valenzuela City, facilitating employment information and assistance; and the Pag-Asa Youth Association of the Philippines (PYAP), which focuses on the comprehensive development of disadvantaged youth through advocacy and support.

A notable intervention mentioned by an interviewee is the digital skills training programs, which include seminars in contact center services and high-speed sewing. These programs equip youth with practical skills relevant to the job market. A respondent notes that financial literacy programs are also pivotal, helping youth manage their finances effectively using digital tools. This involves coordinating with local offices to support savings groups and financial literacy among youth participants. The respondent highlights, **"We**

also taught them about financial literacy because having this knowledge allows them to progress in their own businesses. Plan International collaborated with Prime Tech Institute, which offered contact center services training, which provided a significant possibility for trainees to work in BPO companies in Cebu City."

The sustainability of these digital interventions is significantly strengthened through robust stakeholder connections. These connections ensure that the digital modules and resources developed continue to be supported by partners even after the project's formal conclusion. For example, PESO integrates digital platforms into job postings, skills training, and career counseling, with staff trained to maintain and utilize these tools effectively. Similarly, the Red Nose Foundation continues leveraging digital tools for youth mentoring and relationship-building, supported by regular evaluations and adjustments in partnership with Plan International. A respondent notes, **"The good connection with stakeholders ensures the sustainability of digital intervention beyond the project."**

The W4W project also promotes digital literacy, ensuring that youth are proficient in using digital tools and platforms to access job opportunities and training. The focus on digital literacy significantly contributes to increased employability among all the young women in both

countries. Evidence shows that higher digital literacy levels correlate with better employment outcomes and a greater likelihood of securing jobs in the digital economy (World Economic Forum, 2022). The W4W project's emphasis on digital literacy aligns with these global trends, demonstrating its commitment to enhancing youth employability through technology.

Monitoring and Evaluation tools

The W4W project incorporates robust M&E systems through digital tools, allowing real-time evaluation of program outcomes and participant performance, which facilitate prompt interventions and support. This interactive feedback mechanism is crucial for continuous program adjustments and user support, showcasing a robust M&E system.

Similarly, the Philippines demonstrates a strong use of M&E tools, promoting active learning and real-time feedback. A participant notes, **"The integration of digital tools was seamless. We used mobile apps like Microsoft and WhatsApp to track our learning progress and communicate with trainers" .**

Regular evaluations and performance reviews facilitate continuous improvement and adaptation of program strategies based on real-time data. A respondent emphasizes, **"The organization did not lack the capacity to organize consultative meetings where stakeholders and project participants had the chance to share concerns, issues, and practices that would enable them to develop the system or**

the project itself and attain its objective."

The W4W project underscores the critical role of M&E in assessing digital interventions' efficacy. By meticulously tracking participant progress, challenges, and outcomes, the project aims to refine its approach and maximize impact, as mentioned in the FGDs, **"It is easier to monitor and evaluate all the training processes because we learn a lot with the 'why' for the project."**

Lastly, the project utilizes the Yes!Me platform for monitoring and evaluation. YES!ME is a direct participant monitoring system that tracks individuals for up to five years after program engagement, measuring project impact at both individual and aggregate levels (YesMe! - Youth Employment Solutions System - HISP INDIA). The platform simplifies data collection from enrollment to follow-up, allowing for effective tracking of participants and their engagement. A respondent highlights, **"We also had monitoring as part of the project, which we used alongside the market scan and participant registrations."** By centralizing participant information, YES!ME facilitates efficient monitoring and evaluation processes, supporting targeted interventions based on real-time data and feedback.

The key challenges faced in the project's M&E processes included a lack of sustained follow-up, the impact of the digital divide, difficulties in ensuring long-term sustainability of digital tools,

and external infrastructure constraints that affected the consistency of data collection. These challenges provide important lessons for future projects, particularly in ensuring that M&E systems are adaptable and inclusive of all participants, regardless of their access to technology or geographic location.

For instance, there is limited follow-up with specific groups like boys and young men, as one respondent explains, **"We only had one session for this group, but there is no follow-up afterward."** The digital divide also creates difficulties in tracking progress in underserved areas, with a respondent stating, **"The pandemic provides an opportunity to introduce digital solutions, but not all schools are using them now."** Moreover, sustainability remains a concern, with some partners unable to adopt digital tools long-term. One respondent notes, **"Not all of the digital solutions are adopted by our partners, which raises concerns about long-term sustainability."** Lastly, poor infrastructure, including power outages, hampers data collection, as described by a respondent, **"Infrastructure remains a challenge, especially in the provinces. When there are storms, power outages can last a long time, and people often rely on generators."**

3.4.3. Evaluation Criteria

Several key themes highlight the evaluation criteria of the W4W project in Indonesia and the Philippines, focusing on youth employment and skill development.

Relevance

The digital solutions in the W4W project are specifically designed to meet the diverse needs of young people, particularly those from marginalized communities. By tailoring these solutions to the specific needs of diverse groups, the W4W project empowers young people to seize opportunities and succeed in the digital age. The project recognized the gap between formal education and practical digital skills required by employers, particularly in emerging economies. A participant from Indonesia noted this disconnect:

"They do not have the educational certificate to be able to be involved in the career world... even though most of them have educational certificates... they do not have the skills needed to present to the companies... like how to behave in an interview, how to create a CV, how to present yourself physically in a company..." For example, another participant from Indonesia shares, **"After participating in the W4W project, I applied to several companies using the IT skills, language, and communication skills I gained. I feel confident in applying to companies in Magnesia and am currently**

implementing the knowledge I learned from the courses. These skills are invaluable in my current work."

A Philippine participant illustrates the utility of the training for obtaining employment, elaborating, **"It (the training) helped me to get a job...They taught me how to groom my CV...how to make a business proposal and visualize it. The basic life skills training equipped me with the necessary skills to make informed decisions, solve problems, and effectively manage various aspects of our lives."**

Holistic youth development remains a priority, with programs adopting a comprehensive approach that incorporates technical skills, soft skills, job placement assistance, and mentorship. This strategy resonates with Plan International's focus on equipping young people with the necessary skills to engage in decent work, whether waged or self-employed (Plan International). By integrating digital literacy, entrepreneurial skills, life skills, and peer mentorship, Plan International ensures that participants are ready for real-world job demands. For instance, a participant from Plan Indonesia mentions, **"We recruit youth**

participants into the project and train them to equip them with both technical skills and soft skills. After the training, they are ready to get a job. We mentor them to ensure their safety and teach them how to conduct interviews in workshop sessions so that they can move on to the next step of entering the industry or the workplace."

Employers from the private sector agree that there is a notable gap between the skills young people currently have and those required by employers, particularly in areas such as technology, leadership, and communication. Plan International's tailored digital solutions address this gap by providing practical skills needed in the workplace. A participant from the Philippines emphasized the life skills training, noting, **"And because of the pre-employment and life skills training provided in Yes!Academy, we actually gained knowledge about what is the real worth in the workplace."**

From the KIs, a respondent explains, **"We develop tailored digital skills training programs to meet the unique needs of young job seekers."** He also highlights the importance of accessibility, saying, **"Online platforms and tools are made accessible to**

the youth in remote and underserved areas, reducing barriers to participation."

Support for entrepreneurship emerges as another critical theme, with digital technologies being leveraged to lower barriers for young entrepreneurs. This includes providing tools for various business operations and enhancing financial inclusion by increasing youth access to digital payments and other financial services, as emphasized by the United Nations Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (UNAPCICT, 2020). The integration of digital peer mentorship further supports entrepreneurship by fostering collaborative learning environments. A

participant from Indonesia remarked, **"When I struggle, I have this forum where**

I can discuss with my peers..." This highlights how digital platforms help create supportive spaces for youth, particularly in areas where physical mentorship is not feasible. In the Philippines, the involvement of PESO facilitates direct access to employment information and assistance, thereby bridging the gap between training and actual job placements. As a respondent notes, **"Through the implementation of digital platforms, online job fairs, and targeted training programs, the youth are able to find job placements and develop entrepreneurial skills."**

Active involvement of youth and local stakeholders in both the design and feedback phases is essential. Their participation helps ensure that programs are both practical and culturally appropriate, which is key to enhancing

their overall effectiveness. An interviewee from the Red Nose Foundation emphasizes, **"Working closely with Plan International and other stakeholders, we co-design digital solutions that are practical and effective."** The project's ability to adapt training to diverse contexts is reflected in how it equipped young women to navigate barriers to economic participation, offering tailored solutions like entrepreneurial training and digital business skills. A participant from the Philippines shared, **"So because of Plan International and Yes!Academy, they trained me on how to write a business proposal, visualize it, and then do it in action...And now I can do business and I can also help other youth to do business."** Additionally, another participant notes, **"We incorporated feedback from young people and community**

Coherence

The integration of digital tools in the W4W project is unique when tailored to the specific needs of young women and youth, as evidenced in Indonesia and the Philippines. Participants highlighted the flexibility and accessibility of these digital solutions. A participant from Indonesia states, **"Yes, it is really suitable for youth because it is implemented online. So, they can join from**

members to refine and improve the project design."

Finally, alignment with government and private sector initiatives is essential for maximizing the impact of these programs. For example, the W4W project complements existing government employment programs by providing financial assistance to newly hired youth, thereby enhancing its relevance within the broader youth employment ecosystem (Plan International EU Liaison Office). As one interview respondent explains, **"We believe that Indonesia has a huge population with a young demography. If we can contribute even a small portion to the community, it can create a multiplier effect for the economy and business development. We believe that young people, if we can train and develop them, can become new leaders for the future and bring a multiplier effect to every sector they enter."**

wherever they are, and it is accessible."

The integration of digital solutions helped ensure a seamless transition from traditional to modern approaches in addressing youth employment challenges. An interviewee remarks, **"Our ongoing digital literacy programs are significantly**

enhanced by the project's training modules. These modules offer more advanced skills and cater to the evolving demands of the digital economy...Our traditional job placement services are supplemented with online job fairs and digital job boards, which expanded the reach and accessibility of employment opportunities for youth."

This integration supports the objectives of enhancing youth employability and ensuring that digital tools were not isolated solutions but part of a cohesive ecosystem that maximizes impact. This approach aligns with Indonesia's Digital Transformation Multi-Stakeholders Partnership, which brings together government entities, UN agencies, universities, the private sector, and community organizations to take a holistic approach to digital empowerment, in line with Indonesia's development plans and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

There was also emphasis on the strategic role of digital tools and the importance of leveraging partnerships to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of the interventions. According to a participant from Plan Indonesia, **"We have partnerships with the government, the private sector, and community partners. I think this is one of our strategies for implementing the utilization of digital solutions."** This sentiment aligns

with broader recommendations from UNESCO (2023), which highlights that multi-stakeholder partnerships are vital for driving coherent, youth-centered approaches to empowerment that leverage diverse expertise and resources.

Alignment with broader goals is another key theme across all stakeholders. The digital initiatives are consistently recognized for their alignment with global recommendations, as evidenced by their reflection of the principles outlined in the **"Real Girls Real Lives Connected"** report by Girl Effect and the Vodafone Foundation (2018). The projects not only facilitate educational opportunities but also enhance employability, as seen in the Philippines project, which plans to add a digital marketing course to its offerings. The alignment with all stakeholders' overarching objectives ensures that the project's efforts are relevant and integral to advancing ambitions and core missions. Partnerships are identified as a key strategy for implementing digital solutions, thereby ensuring the coherence and sustainability of the interventions.

Lastly, the adaptation and flexibility of the digital solutions to meet the evolving needs of stakeholders are consistently highlighted. Participants in the Philippines appreciate the program's adaptability, as one of them notes,

"We can still use and enroll in the courses that we want...they were planning to add a digital marketing course in Yes!Academy."

Others also recognize the flexibility of these solutions in complementing existing programs and addressing the dynamic demands of the digital economy, with a project participant emphasizing the relevance of the project's training modules to the evolving job market. Other stakeholders echo this sentiment by highlighting their strategy of utilizing partnerships to implement digital solutions effectively.

These themes collectively point to a coherent and strategic approach in integrating digital tools within educational and employment programs, aligning with broader organizational and

Effectiveness

The digital interventions in the W4W project are successful in helping participants gain marketable skills. All the young women in the KIIs and FGDs share similar thoughts, they have observed positive changes in their employment prospects as a result of participating in the project. Participants felt that the digital training programs significantly enhance employability and digital literacy. This is evident from testimonials like one from a youth participant in Indonesia, who states,

"My experience in joining this program has truly been life-changing. I included it on my CV and it has opened so many doors for me..."

Another participant from the Philippines shares, **"They taught me valuable skills including how to polish my CV and create a business proposal from scratch."**

These statements underscore the transformative impact of the digital training programs, which align with broader findings from the W4W final evaluation report, Indonesia which highlights that the project's efforts to provide support to the youth, particularly through the involvement of parents, were highly effective in promoting meaningful change among participants.

The report shows that parental support played a crucial role in driving significant positive outcomes for youth in the program. The data indicates that **96%** of the respondents (431 out of 450) obtained parental consent to participate in the project. The evaluation found a significant correlation (significance = 0.05) between parental support and positive youth outcomes in categories such

developmental goals, fostering collaboration across various stakeholders, and ensuring that the interventions remain flexible and adaptive to the needs of young women and youth participants.

as Connected, Improved, and Transformed. This parental involvement significantly increased the likelihood of youth either securing employment, returning to school, or participating in apprenticeship programs. The project provided 1,488 instances of parental support out of a total of 1,643 youth supports, underscoring the critical role that family involvement played in fostering changes and enhancing the capacities of participants.

Additionally, the report highlights that the Market Scan Study, conducted twice as part of the project, was successful in identifying relevant labor market trends that informed curriculum development, ensuring that young workers were well-prepared for employment. The participants found the platform's focus on updating learning resources according to technological and job market needs to be highly beneficial. An interviewee commented, **"The platform keeps updating its tools, which helps me stay up-to-date with the job market and technology."**

These findings align with the transformative impact of the digital training programs, emphasizing how the courses **"equipped participants with the skills they need to stay updated."** These insights underscore the broader success of the project in enhancing employability and digital literacy, particularly for young women.

Testimonials from project participants highlight the practical benefits of the online courses, illustrating how the acquisition of digital skills not only facilitated job placements but also enhanced

overall financial well-being for participants: **"The skills I gained helped me find a job, and I also got a certificate that I can use on my CV. The skills I learned have helped me at work, improving my financial situation".** These testimonials align with the

W4W final evaluation report, Philippines, which emphasizes that the project paved the way for participants to achieve economic empowerment through essential training and skills. The report indicates that opportunities for skill enhancement have transformed the lives of youth classified as neither educated, employed, nor trained (NEETs), as well as senior high school students and young men and women in secondary and TVET schools. The skills acquired led to apprenticeships, employment, or entrepreneurship, supported by partnerships with private sector entities and government agencies. Multiple stakeholders emphasize the program's success in equipping participants with advanced digital skills as it was mentioned, **"These modules offer more advanced skills and cater to the evolving demands of the digital economy".** Furthermore, the effectiveness of life skills training developed participants' abilities to handle job interviews and make informed decisions regarding employment, contributing to their aspirations for better futures.

The programs also play a pivotal role in socio-economic empowerment, particularly for young women. One participant reports that **"The project decreases the number of out-of-school youth in the city and provides employment too...98% of the W4W project**

participants have employment status with their good performance in their companies...At least 95% of them are in entrepreneurship because of the livelihood assistance given by Plan International." This highlights

the programs' effectiveness in fostering economic empowerment and reducing youth unemployment. This observation is supported by the Girl Effect & Vodafone Foundation (2018) report, which documents the resourcefulness and perseverance young women display in accessing digital technology, leading to significant socio-economic gains.

One respondent acknowledges the importance of accessible tools stating, **"Tools for business planning and management have nurture entrepreneurial ventures achieving high rates of engagement in entrepreneurship among project participants,"** demonstrating the wide-ranging benefits of the training programs.

Project stakeholders further validate these findings, emphasizing that by **"offering advanced skills aligned with the evolving demands of the digital economy, the project directly contributes to participants' employability and career progression."** This underscores the

programs' role in facilitating socio-economic advancement and career development, which highlights the correlation between digital skills and employment outcomes.

Despite the successes, challenges such as the digital divide and maintaining engagement in online learning environments are noted across all stakeholders. For some, these challenges are addressed through mentoring, as highlighted in the FGDs, **"There are challenges dealing with young people with mood swings. So that's why we have mentoring. This helped young people especially those who had struggled finishing the training modules. So we help them and we guide them."** This approach helps sustain participant engagement and ensure successful outcomes.

Other participants also recognize barriers such as technical glitches and the need for regular updates to digital platforms, which occasionally disrupts the learning process. However, solutions like free Wi-Fi in remote areas and the flexibility of online learning are implemented to overcome these challenges. The project addresses barriers to digital learning by implementing key adaptations such as providing free Wi-Fi in remote

Scalability

The W4W project shows a strong foundation for scalability due to its effective use of digital platforms and local partnerships. Utilizing digital tools in educational projects has demonstrated promising potential for scalability, which is crucial for expanding the accessibility of digital education to young women globally. Such projects are pivotal for bridging the gender digital divide and elevating the socio-economic status of young women, aligning with insights from various reports that underscore the significance of designing with scalability in mind. This approach allows these

areas and tailoring digital training modules for mobile access. This approach ensures participants can engage in online learning at their own pace, fitting training around their schedules. As a result, **85%** of participants show improved digital literacy scores. The project also includes mentorship programs offering both online and face-to-face support, further helping participants navigate challenges and succeed. These combined efforts highlight how adaptable digital solutions can significantly enhance learning outcomes and participant success. A respondent says, **"The flexibility of online learning has allowed participants to progress at their own pace, fitting training around their schedules."**

Project participants acknowledge these challenges but also highlight the program's strengths, **"The comprehensive nature of the training content covers essential skills required in today's job market, enhancing participants' readiness for diverse career paths."**

initiatives to cater to multiple user needs, ensuring they can be effectively replicated and customized across different regions. In Indonesia, the project's success is notably enhanced by the country's strong foundation in digital literacy. The ability to adapt and modify digital tools for use in various regions highlights the importance of considering local connectivity and device limitations. A participant notes, **"Yes, it is really suitable for the youth**

because it is also implemented online. So, they can join from wherever they are, and it is accessible” (*project participant*), reinforcing the value of online platforms in increasing accessibility for young individuals regardless of their location.

Similarly, the Philippines showcases an impressive capacity for scaling up digital initiatives, primarily through integrating digital platforms in the education and employment sectors. The key to extending the project's success lies in leveraging existing infrastructure and forging partnerships with local organizations and educational institutions. Insights from the Girl Effect and Vodafone Foundation report (2018), detail how girls access and use mobile technology—often through borrowing or shared use—which is vital for enriching the scalability of digital solutions in the country. Indonesia and the Philippines exemplify how thoughtful design and effective scaling strategies can significantly impact digital empowerment projects. By focusing on the diverse needs of young women and considering each country's unique technological and demographic landscape, these initiatives can serve as models for leveraging digital tools to make education more accessible and inclusive, ultimately contributing to reducing the gender digital gap.

By combining the resources, expertise, and reach of both the public and private sectors, public-private partnerships (PPPs) can help scale up digital training programs by expanding training to underserved regions and communities through innovative models like mobile training units or online courses (ADB, n.d). Scalability is a cornerstone of the W4W project's mission to enhance youth employment and entrepreneurship through digital solutions. Stakeholders recognize the potential for the training programs to scale up, reaching a larger number of youth and providing a broader impact across different regions. In the

Kills a respondent emphasizes, **“If we can train the youth and also develop their skills, they can be new leaders for the future and can bring a multiplier effect to every sector.”**

The project's ability to expand and adapt its digital solutions across diverse contexts relies on several key factors. A primary concern is the technological infrastructure available in various locations. Ensuring that digital solutions can function effectively across regions with differing levels of internet connectivity and access to digital devices is essential. While urban areas might have robust internet infrastructure, rural areas often face significant connectivity challenges, necessitating adaptable solutions. Stakeholders emphasize the importance of considering geographic and socio-economic diversity, with one participant stating, **“We focus on choosing digital platforms that could accommodate increasing numbers of users and job postings.”** Furthermore, other participants highlight the need for community engagement and mapping exercises to adapt strategies to local needs.

Local digital literacy levels also play a crucial role, as the ability of the youth to engage with digital tools varies widely. Partners need to implement tailored training programs to bridge these gaps, which involve developing user-friendly interfaces and providing comprehensive training to ensure that young people can fully benefit from the digital resources provided. Additionally, the organizations consider the cultural and socioeconomic contexts of the youth they aim to serve, requiring extensive local engagement and

the inclusion of community feedback in the design and implementation of digital initiatives.

The project's potential for scalability was emphasized through its on using digital platforms to reach a wider audience. The integration of technology provides evidence of potential capacity to expand training programs efficiently and effectively to a larger number of project participants. The project demonstrates a

Sustainability

Digital tools in educational programs have proven pivotal in advancing sustainable digital education practices, particularly in expanding opportunities for young women to access learning and career pathways. The **"Real Girls, Real Lives, connected"** report by Girl Effect & Vodafone Foundation (2018) emphasizes the need to develop digital platforms that maintain their value and relevance over time. These platforms play a crucial role in providing sustained access to digital resources and nurturing continuous skill development, thus reflecting the core principles of sustainable digital solutions.

In Indonesia, the impactful nature of sustainable digital education practices is vividly demonstrated through the W4W project, which leverages digital tools to offer ongoing learning opportunities. A reflection from one participant notes, **"It is truly beneficial, and I genuinely hope that it continues so that other young individuals can benefit from this project just as I have,"** , underscoring the importance of ensuring the enduring usefulness of digital solutions. The UNICEF GenderTech Toolkit (2021), emphasizes the significance of incorporating user feedback into the design process to adapt and enhance digital solutions in alignment with users' needs. This approach holds particular relevance in Indonesia, where cultural and social norms substantially influence digital

proactive approach to expanding its reach and impact by focusing on platforms that can accommodate increasing numbers of participants.

A participant says, **"We focus on choosing digital platforms that can accommodate increasing numbers."**

engagement among young women. Integrating more local content to address specific community challenges can further bolster the sustainability of these digital solutions.

Similarly, the experience in the Philippines highlights the positive impact of sustainable digital education practices. Through issuing certificates upon course completion, young women obtain tangible evidence of their skill development, significantly boosting their prospects for future employment. One participant notes, **"Yes, I also received a certificate that I can showcase on my CV for future job applications"** highlighting the role of certificates in facilitating long-term career growth. The participant's suggestion for offline course options indicates a broader need for accessibility, pointing to the potential adoption of a hybrid learning model that integrates both online and offline modules. Such an approach would ensure inclusivity and equity, meeting the needs of a broader demographic, including those with limited internet access and diverse learning preferences.

Partnerships are fundamental in creating, maintaining, and expanding sustainable digital solutions for online training and youth empowerment in Indonesia and the Philippines (Plan International, 2023). They bring together diverse strengths and resources, fostering innovation, ensuring relevance, and promoting long-term impact. Partners in the W4W project

pooling resources and expertise enhance local trainers' capacity and ensure high-quality content of digital training platforms. The importance of strategic planning in sustaining these initiatives is illustrated through some approaches taken and involve pre-implementation meetings. A

participant highlights, **"Since we have these short-term and long-term directions of the specific project...**

These meetings were crucial for addressing both immediate and

future needs." Project stakeholders ensure

that the digital solutions implemented during the project are seamlessly integrated into regular

operations. Another participant notes, **"We**

incorporate the use of digital

platforms into our day-to-day

activities, such as job postings,

skills training, and career

counseling." By embedding these

technologies into their routine operations, project stakeholders aim to sustain the benefits of digital solutions over the long-term.

To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the digital solutions, partners establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. One

respondent explains, **"We implement**

monitoring systems to track the

usage and impact of the digital

platforms post-project." This ongoing

evaluation allows project stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and to adapt their strategies to maintain the relevance and efficiency of the digital solutions over time. One participant

addresses sustainability by emphasizing ongoing mentoring and relationship building to ensure long-term support for young people beyond the

initial training modules. **"The focus was not only on finishing the modules but also on mentoring and encouraging them, building relationships that can be in line with their needs and wants."**

The W4W project effectively utilizes partnerships to enhance its reach and impact. Collaborating with organizations enables the project to leverage expertise, resources, and networks, thereby strengthening its implementation and sustainability efforts. When sustainability efforts are discussed, one participant noted financial concerns as a potential challenge to sustaining the project's impact.

In addition to non-governmental initiatives, the private sector in Indonesia is proactively investing in digital education to ensure sustainable workforce development. This strategic focus includes developing training modules and video learning resources aimed at enhancing critical skills needed in today's corporate environment. A

participant from the FGDs explains, **"We**

think it is really important for

young people to have an expert

so they can have a competitive

skills compared to traditional

skills that they already get from

school." By prioritizing investments in digital

education, private sector companies in Indonesia can foster a skilled workforce capable of sustained success. This not only enhances

employee capabilities but also strengthens organizational resilience within a dynamic business environment.

The commitment to sustainability is further demonstrated through continuous improvement

and long-term impact strategies. The project's focus on providing ongoing access to training resources and expanding the curriculum indicates a long-term perspective aimed at maximizing participant benefits. One project stakeholder notes, **"We can still use and enroll in the courses that we want...they**

3.4.4. Gender-Transformative Approach (GTA)

Gender Norms

The W4W project serves as an inspiring example of how proactive steps can be taken to break down harmful gender stereotypes and promote equal opportunities for youth in employment and digital skills development. This initiative, central to digital SOYEE projects, boldly confronts traditional gender roles, ensuring that digital training and job opportunities are free from gender bias. Drawing on insights from Johansen's (2023) ICT4D article, the project highlights the crucial need to address gender disparities in digital access by actively challenging and dismantling the gender norms that hinder technological access and skills development.

In both countries, the project successfully creates an environment where young women and men are provided with identical opportunities to develop tech-related skills and pursue careers. This approach challenges traditional gender expectations by focusing on merit and offering all qualified individuals, regardless of gender, the same work opportunities. As a result, participants not only enhance their IT and communication skills but also gain the confidence to apply these skills effectively in the workplace. A participant from Indonesia shares how the program equipped her with the necessary IT and language skills, leading to newfound confidence. Similarly, in the Philippines, the emphasis on skills and qualifications over gender underscores the global effort to bridge digital divides, which is essential for ensuring digital literacy and connectivity for people of all genders. One participant interviewed highlights, **"the project provided equal opportunities for both males and females to work**

were planning to add a digital marketing course in Yes!Academy." This emphasis on continuous learning and development reflects a commitment to providing long-term support and opportunities for participants to enhance their skills and knowledge.

anywhere," perfectly capturing the project's dedication to equality and its significant role in challenging and reshaping traditional gender norms in the context of employment and digital literacy.

Collaboration with community-based organizations plays a crucial role in promoting gender equality and shifting discriminatory norms. All partners actively promote gender equality and inclusivity through their various programs, ensuring that their projects cater to individuals of all gender identities, including LGBTQIA+ individuals and people with disabilities, to prevent discrimination and promote acceptance. As a respondent explains, **"The project addressed gender norms through efforts to include both boys and girls in its initiatives... Currently, we are aiming for equality by empowering not only boys but also women. We are also working towards civil agreements regarding LGBTQIA+ rights, ensuring that there is no shame, abuse, or bullying."**

To promote equal employment opportunities for young women, another respondent mentions

integrating the Magna Carta of Women³ (MCW) into their company policies. MCW is a comprehensive women's human rights law in the Philippines that seeks to eliminate discrimination against women.

A success story from the project highlights a young woman in the Philippines who defied gender stereotypes by becoming a safety officer in a construction firm, a respondent from the private sector shares, **"She is only 22 years old and recently, a local network station visited our office. They featured students who were erecting our scaffolds and they were surprised to see a young woman doing what is typically considered a male job. Now, she is a safety officer in one of the construction firms here in the metro."**

The project's commitment to challenging gender stereotypes is further demonstrated by its encouragement of participation in non-traditional roles and its focus on success stories that defy gender norms. This approach is evident in the increased enrollment of young men in traditionally female-dominated fields and the success story of a young woman who became a welder and is now working abroad. A respondent notes, **"...because of the gender and awareness workshops that we had and the advocacy to break the gender stereotypes we had a lot of enrollments for young men who would take up dress making. And in fact, we also have a case**

story of a young woman who became a welder and I believe she is now abroad."

Plan International's **"gender-transformative education" model** further supports this effort by aiming to equip and empower stakeholders—students, teachers, communities, and policymakers—to examine, challenge, and change harmful gender norms and imbalances of power (Gender-Transformative Education, Plan International).

Girls and Young Women Agency

The W4W project aligns with global efforts to close the gender digital divide, amplifying the agency of young women and bringing about positive change. By equipping youth, particularly young women with digital, language, and communication skills, not only fosters their autonomy but also boosts their confidence, enabling them to confidently and actively participate in the job market.

A participant from Indonesia shares, **"The I.T., language, and communication skills I learned have given me the confidence to apply for jobs locally,"** highlighting the project's direct impact on individual empowerment and employability. Similarly, in the Philippines, participants utilize their newfound skills to secure employment and empower others, further extending the project's reach and impact. This ability to leverage digital skills for job opportunities and articulate them professionally underscores the project's tremendous success in fostering independence and self-reliance among young women.

Partners focus on fostering self-reliance and independence among young people, regardless of their gender. A respondent from the KIIs

³ Republic Act 9710: The Magna Carta of Women
<https://pcw.gov.ph/magna-carta-of-women/>

expresses, **"We provided training such as CV writing using Canva, where participants can edit and update their CV anywhere as long as there is an Internet connection...We provided young people access to the digital platforms that provide job vacancies. We helped and directed them to use those platforms to look for and apply for jobs. The Yes!Academy was also useful in directing young people with suitable topics and training that are in line with their dreams and wants."**

By offering skill development programs and encouraging leadership, the project empowers participants to take control of their lives and actively participate in economic and social spheres. Another respondent emphasizes, **"We have a skill development program that enhances both individual skills and knowledge. The program is very interesting and helps participants engage in economic activities, such as entering a world-class or entrepreneurial environment. We also support gender equality initiatives, encouraging young**

women to become leaders and champions."

In Indonesia and the Philippines, Plan International's programs successfully implement various initiatives to support skills development and leadership among young women. For instance, in Indonesia, a Youth Situational and Gender Analysis reveals that families play a crucial role in youth job choices, with **92%** of young women and **82%** of young men seeking family approval before accepting job opportunities. This indicates the importance of involving families in the process of encouraging young women to pursue leadership and economic opportunities. (SOYEE, Reference Guide)

Condition & Social Position

Empowering young women by providing them with increased access to resources and opportunities is essential for their social and economic advancement. This is especially crucial in developing economies, where equipping young women with the necessary tools to navigate and thrive in the modern, digital-centric job market can make a significant impact.

An exemplary illustration of this is the W4W project in Indonesia, which has a profound effect on the social standing of young women by equipping them with market-relevant digital skills. For instance, a respondent shares her personal success story, reporting significant improvements in her job prospects. She mentions that HR personnel recognize her training experiences, indicating a growing acknowledgment of the value of such programs in the professional landscape. These skills not only improve the employability of youth but also elevate their societal status, making a strong case for aligning digital literacy programs with global economic shifts and the demands of Industry 4.0.

The real impact of these interventions becomes apparent through the firsthand experiences shared by program participants. For example, a participant from Indonesia shares how the digital skills training she received directly led to her securing employment, thereby enhancing her social status and economic independence. Similarly, in the Philippines, the combination of

skills training and financial incentives represents a comprehensive approach to supporting the advancement of young women. These personal testimonies vividly demonstrate the effective role such projects play in elevating women's status and social condition by enhancing their access to educational resources and employment opportunities.

The project greatly reduces the number of out-of-school youth and enhances job prospects for all individuals, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Strategies to overcome barriers faced by marginalized youth, especially young women, are prominently featured across all partner organizations. These strategies include targeted support services, data-driven approaches to identify needs, and tailored interventions to address socio-economic challenges. From the KIs, a respondent highlights the project's transformative impact, stating, **"The project significantly decreased the number of out-of-school youth in the city, and it has improved employment opportunities for everyone, whether they are male, female, or members of the LGBTQIA+ community... 98% of participants have day employment, and at least 95% have pursued entrepreneurship due to the livelihood assistance provided by Plan International."**

This is supported by the W4W project final evaluation report; Philippines, which indicates that despite the global health pandemic, the project milestones and indicators were mostly achieved, even surpassing the 100% target.

Improving social conditions and position is a core aim of the project, focusing on providing protection, addressing discrimination, and building community support networks. These efforts contribute to creating a safer and more

supportive environment for participants, particularly vulnerable groups. The emphasis on the provision of protection and rights in the workplace and the establishment of community support networks indicate a comprehensive approach to addressing the social factors that impact participants' lives. A respondent notes,

"We have materials on protection, including prevention of exploitation and discrimination, as well as information about workplace rights... We also have a community support network, collaborating with communities in Jakarta, Lombok, and Samar. This network is integrated into our project sites, regardless of the specific project, and has enhanced overall effectiveness."

In the Philippines and Indonesia, Plan International implements various initiatives to support the improvement of social conditions and the position of young women. Additionally, the project supports young women, including refugees and internally displaced persons, in accessing employment through skills training, financial literacy, and business start-up support. (SOYEE, Reference guide on Gender Transformative Marker)

Transformative Masculinities

The W4W project goes beyond traditional strategies by involving men in activities typically geared towards women, thereby creating a more inclusive environment and reshaping societal perceptions of gender roles. Such an approach is vital in sectors like tech and industrial fields where women have been historically underrepresented. The project's emphasis on educating and preparing women for these emerging sectors

underscores the importance of accessibility and equality in workforce development.

Global trends support the push for increased female inclusion in technology and industrial sectors. There is a noticeable shift towards gender inclusivity in education and the professional world, with numerous programs worldwide emphasizing the need to equip women for significant roles in these fields. These efforts align with broader objectives to dismantle traditional gender norms, reflecting a collective movement towards equity and inclusivity.

A participant interviewed illustrates the project's success: **"We learned about gender equality and the rights of both women and men. The project was suitable for both men and women"** This quote demonstrates the project's effective delivery of an integrated educational experience that encompasses both genders. It highlights the project's unique approach to gender equality by engaging men in the discussion and fostering a unified effort to challenge and redefine traditional gender roles. This initiative underscores the importance of creating spaces for open dialogue and collaboration across genders, nurturing a community that understands and respects diverse gender roles and responsibilities.

Moreover, the project has had a broader impact on reshaping gender roles, as evidenced by an increase in young men enrolling in courses traditionally associated with women as revealed by a respondent, **"Because of the gender and awareness workshops... we had a lot of enrollments for young men who would take up dressmaking."**

Efforts within the project ensure that both men and women participate in the initiatives and mutual support among genders by promoting equal access to training, employment, and

entrepreneurship opportunities, irrespective of gender. A respondent notes, **"We assisted both women and men, including fathers, to participate in the project. It was open to all, and we reached out to both women and men."** This commitment to inclusive participation is further evidenced by the mandatory gender equality training for all participants, which ensures that boys and men are actively engaged in learning about gender equality and its importance. Another respondent highlights, **"All the participants in our project joined the gender equality class because it is mandatory in our training programs."** By involving boys and men in gender equality training, the project acknowledges the role of men in promoting gender equality and preventing gender-based violence.

Intersectionality & Inclusion

The project exemplifies a strong commitment to fostering an inclusive and diverse environment, reflecting an understanding of inclusion as fundamental to its success. This is supported by the W4W project final evaluation report Philippines, which was rated as having **medium to high potential based on Plan International's gender-transformative marker**. The project successfully contributed to the practical and strategic gender needs of youth, including skills upgrades and employment opportunities, while also challenging traditional gender norms and promoting gender equality. As noted in the evaluation report, the project led to changes in behavior and mindsets on gender roles, evidenced by shifts in personal empowerment and participation in project activities. The evaluation further notes the project's inclusive reach, ensuring that youth from marginalized and vulnerable sections of the population were among its participants. The project addressed barriers

like financial support for training and internet access, which are common challenges for job seekers from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, it also highlighted challenges with intersectional inclusion, specifically regarding the lack of data on LGBTQI+ participants and disability inclusion.

A participant from the Philippines notes the inclusive atmosphere of the Yes!Academy: **“During the project and during my youth mobilization, the Yes!Academy was friendly. We accepted anyone, whether it was a man, woman or a member of the LGBTQ+”**. This sentiment underscores the project's commitment to creating an environment where all individuals feel valued and included, irrespective of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Further demonstrating the project's dedication to accessibility and inclusion, an Indonesian participant in the FGDs shares her appreciation for the accommodations made for participants with disabilities, **“For my friends with disabilities, there was a sign language translator that helped them to access the course.”**

In addition to these efforts, Plan International effectively leverages diverse expertise and perspectives through a broad range of partners to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The W4W project specifically focuses on creating an environment free from discrimination based on sex, education, race, or gender identity. Partners emphasize inclusivity by actively engaging youth from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and gender identities. A respondent interviewed highlights, **“We made sure that our organization is an inclusive one, that the youth**

would not be discriminated against because of their sex, education, race or gender identity.”

Similarly, another respondent notes the project's commitment to marginalized individuals, **“In social welfare, we are committed to the welfare of the community, especially targeting the grassroots and the most marginalized individuals, including the poorest of the poor.”**

The project's efforts in ensuring equal access to opportunities for marginalized groups, including individuals with disabilities, young mothers, and those from low-income backgrounds, further illustrate its commitment to inclusivity. This proactive approach to reaching marginalized groups and promoting equality highlights its dedication to creating a non-discriminatory environment for all participants.

Enabling Environment

The project is making significant strides in overcoming systemic barriers and creating an environment that supports digital education for all. Its emphasis on inclusivity and accessibility is crucial for ensuring that everyone benefits from digital resources. By offering online access and considering offline options, the initiative demonstrates a sincere dedication to meeting diverse needs and improving participant access.

An interviewee shares, **“We developed localized content and partnered with local NGOs to ensure effective communication and support for participants from different regions.”** This thoughtful

approach is essential for reaching a wide audience, including youths and individuals with disabilities who may encounter difficulties with online learning. The ability to join from different locations highlights the project's commitment to fostering youth involvement.

The W4W project strategically allocates its resources to ensure maximum impact by appointing dedicated staff for key components. These include specialists in vocational education, M&E, and digital platform management, ensuring that each aspect of the project was managed effectively. An interviewee highlights this approach stating, **"We have responsible staff in each part of the department... the budget was allocated strategically to support these roles, facilitating the effective delivery of training and other services."**

The project aligns with government policies supporting digital literacy and employment initiatives. These policies facilitate smoother collaboration with government institutions like the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in the Philippines and ensure that the project's objectives are in line with national priorities. Additionally, partnerships with local NGOs and community organizations play a crucial role in the grassroots implementation of the project, enabling it to reach marginalized youth and underserved communities. A respondent emphasizes the importance of these partnerships, stating, **"Government policies supporting digital literacy and employment initiatives were crucial... The presence of local NGOs and community organizations provided valuable support."** This collaboration allows the project to address access barriers and offer tailored resources, further empowering young people to participate in the digital economy.

The project's enabling environment is further supported by various forms of assistance. For example, a respondent mentions, **"We ensured participants could access job opportunities by providing the expenses they needed to provide the pre-employment documents that the companies are looking for."** Partners collaborate to create conducive environments for youth growth and development through comprehensive training programs, mentorship opportunities, and inclusive practices in employment and entrepreneurship. The respondent adds, **"For young people who did not finish training, we needed to reach out to them when they needed more guidance, assistance and reminders to keep them on track and be able to finish what they had to finish."**

This supportive approach is reinforced by direct feedback from participants in various regions. In Indonesia, a young participant suggests incorporating offline or face-to-face options to make the courses more accessible, particularly for youths with disabilities. This highlights the ongoing need for flexible learning options to ensure inclusivity. In the Philippines, a youth participant expresses gratitude for financial support that enabled internet access, essential for overcoming economic barriers to digital participation. These personal experiences vividly demonstrate the project's effectiveness in creating an accessible and empowering learning environment for diverse groups, advancing its mission to address systemic access barriers.

The project also aims to remove barriers and facilitate equal access to opportunities. A participant notes, **"First, we covered the internet costs for marginalized**

youth to access digital solutions. Secondly, we facilitated their use of computers at different centers, since we don't have the necessary infrastructure ourselves, but we partnered with these centers so they could access the digital solutions. Additionally, we provided subsidies for transportation, including allowances for marginalized individuals."

In terms of program design, the project employs a Human Centered Design approach where the

3.4.5 Youth Centeredness

Youth Engagement & Participation

In SOYEE projects, young women and men are actively involved in designing strategies and interventions, implementing specific relevant activities such as peer-to-peer or intergenerational dialogue, and participating in the monitoring and evaluation process, including data collection and analysis (SOYEE, Reference guide on Gender Transformative Marker). According to a young woman in Indonesia, the project ensures that stakeholders, especially young women, not only play a key role in the planning and implementation phases but also have significant opportunities to express their views and work together to find common ground. The project's focus on youth engagement highlights the increased youth participation in digital platforms, indicating a more active role in learning, youth involvement in broader project activities, and youth consultation in the design and testing of digital tools. In the Philippines, the project focuses on young women going beyond just participation and actively prioritizing equipping them with practical skills that are highly sought after in the industry.

All the participants interviewed acknowledge that the project engages youth by involving them in

youth were consulted and involved in designing the YES Academy and the pre-employment orientation course. This involvement is in line with government guidance for those entering the workforce. A respondent highlights, **"We have the Human Centered Design where youth are consulted and involved in the design of the YES!Academy, including the content and courses. We also involve them in the pre-employment orientation process, which is based on the government's guidance for those entering the workforce."**

decision-making processes and providing them with opportunities to contribute actively.

A participant in the Philippines recognizes the value of a skilled workforce and actively employs young people above the legal working age. However, he acknowledges the unique challenges associated with recruiting young people in the Philippines, where parental influence plays a significant role in job decisions.

He highlights, **"One of the challenges is that young people often change their minds easily because they are still dependent on their parents. If their parents do not support them, they feel discouraged and may not be very eager to follow through with their plans. They might even feel forced to pursue certain paths due to their situation and lack of resources."**

In Indonesia, an in-partner company recognizes the value of a youthful perspective and actively employs young talent. However, recruiting and retaining this demographic presents unique challenges. An interview respondent emphasizes the requirement for a thoughtful strategy that recognizes the capabilities and limitations of young individuals, referring to the notion of the **"sandwich generation"** as he notes, **"They tend to give up quickly and dislike constant control. However, we need to give them opportunities to innovate and create what they believe is best, while still providing some guidance.."** Another challenge mentioned is that young recruits often expect companies to provide them with access to the latest technology, both for personal and professional use. They also prioritize flexible work arrangements and a strong

work-life balance. By addressing these challenges and embracing the unique strengths of young talent, the private sector companies in the Philippines and Indonesia can build a more sustainable, enthusiastic workforce. This will contribute not only to the success of their businesses but also to a brighter future for both the companies and young people themselves. Plan International's initiatives in the Philippines and Indonesia emphasize the importance of youth involvement in all stages of project development.

As a participant states, **"I think Tessa was the most consultatively designed digital tool from the persona of the chatbot through the writing of the script. The young people were consulted across the testing of the app as well."** This participatory approach ensures that youth voices are heard and incorporated, fostering a sense of ownership and enhancing the project's overall impact.

4. Discussion: Lessons Learned

4.1 Effectiveness of Digital Interventions

Digital interventions have proven highly effective in enhancing youth employability and skills development by strategically leveraging accessible, market-driven digital tools. E-learning platforms, gamification, mobile accessibility, and real-time data analysis have significantly impacted target youth populations, offering insights into best practices for similar SOYEE projects. These interventions take a comprehensive approach, including pre- and post-training assessments, tracking employment outcomes, collecting feedback from participants and employers, analyzing job search data, and



recording skill certification acquisition. By providing relevant and practical digital training, these programs effectively address barriers to employment, empowering young people to take control of their career paths. The mobile-friendly platforms and real-time data collection further strengthened the program's adaptability and continuous support, highlighting the transformative potential of well-designed digital interventions in youth employment and skills development.

Key Outcomes of Digital Interventions

1. Improved Youth Employability and Skills Development

- **Digital Literacy and Technical Skills:** Digital platforms, particularly those offering gamified and traditional online courses accessible via mobile devices, are essential in building digital literacy and technical skills. Training on financial literacy and entrepreneurship is a crucial component of digital interventions, particularly in fostering self-employment and economic independence among youth. By equipping participants with the necessary skills to manage finances and start businesses, these programs empower a new generation of entrepreneurs who are prepared to succeed in a digital economy. Digital literacy and technical skills, including proficiency in productivity software, digital communication tools, and online job search platforms, are crucial in today's job market. These skills give the youth a competitive edge and contribute to higher job placement rates, increased confidence especially among young women, improved digital literacy scores, and positive feedback from employers.
- **Job-Readiness Training:** Practical job-readiness training, including resume building, job interview preparation, and workplace communication. This training

2. Access to Flexible Online Learning

- The availability of online courses enables participants to acquire new skills in a flexible and accessible manner. These courses often cater to a wide range of skill levels and interests, from basic digital literacy to advanced vocational training, ensuring that participants can find content that meets their needs. The integration of

directly contributes to improved employability, with participants reporting increased confidence in applying for jobs and attending interviews, which translates into higher employment success rates.

- **Vocational Skills Development:** Tailoring courses to local market needs, such as digital skills and technical vocations, equips participants with the specific skills demanded by employers. This alignment with market requirements enhances participants' attractiveness as job candidates, making them more competitive in the labor market.
- **Economic Empowerment and Livelihoods:** Programs that support job transitions, business startups, and saving groups contribute to long-term economic stability and financial independence, providing participants with both job skills and financial management abilities. These components are crucial for ensuring the sustainability of individual livelihoods, as they foster long-term economic stability and financial independence. Participants not only develop job-specific skills but also gain valuable financial management capabilities and opportunities to build sustainable income sources.

digital job matching services further enhances employability by aligning educational programs with current market demands, providing participants with relevant labor market information and career guidance.

3. Promotion of Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship

- Training on financial literacy and entrepreneurship is a crucial component of digital interventions, particularly in fostering self-employment and economic

independence among the youth. By equipping participants with the necessary skills to manage finances and start businesses, the trainings empower a new generation of entrepreneurs who are prepared to succeed in a digital economy.

Key Digital Components for Success

The success of digital SOYEE projects can be attributed to several key digital components:

1. **E-Learning Platforms:** Platforms such as the YES!ACADEMY, especially when mobile-friendly, provide a wide range of courses that cater to various skill levels and interests. Gamification elements in these platforms can increase engagement and motivation among participants, leading to better retention and outcomes.
2. **Data Collection and Analysis:** Real-time monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of participant progress and program effectiveness enable timely interventions and adjustments. A data-driven approach ensures that digital interventions can adapt to participants' needs and provide continuous support.
3. **Digital Job Matching Services:** These services, offered by platforms such as Tessa, facilitate connections between participants and potential employers, streamlining the job search process and increasing employment opportunities by matching newly acquired skills with relevant job openings. Tools that support resume creation and interview preparation are also crucial in enhancing participants' job readiness.
4. **Mobile Accessibility:** Ensuring that digital platforms are mobile-friendly allows for broader access, especially in areas where computer access may be limited. This accessibility is essential in overcoming barriers and reaching a wider audience.

4.2 Challenges and Barriers

Implementing digital skills development programs in diverse and resource-constrained environments often presents numerous challenges and barriers. These obstacles, which can significantly impact the effectiveness and reach of such initiatives, highlight the complexities of deploying digital solutions across different contexts. This section identifies and analyzes key issues commonly encountered, including internet connectivity, affordability, access to digital tools, and variations in participant engagement.

1. Internet Connectivity

A major challenge in many digital skills programs is the issue of internet connectivity. In several regions, particularly in rural and remote areas, internet connections are often unreliable or non-existent. This connectivity issue poses a significant barrier to accessing online courses and digital resources.

In countries with vast geographic diversity, participants in remote areas often struggle with poor internet infrastructure. This limitation can severely affect their ability to consistently access digital platforms and resources. The inconsistent availability of the internet hinders continuous learning and full participation in online training modules.

Similarly, in regions with low internet penetration and unstable connections, maintaining regular participation in online training programs becomes difficult. Frequent connectivity disruptions create barriers to the effective delivery and engagement with digital interventions, limiting the overall success of the programs.

- **Internet Costs:** High costs of internet data plans can be a significant issue for participants. Even with efforts to provide allowances or subsidies, the ongoing cost of maintaining an internet connection remains a challenge for sustained engagement in the programs.

3. Access to Digital Tools

Lack of access to appropriate digital tools, such as laptops or smartphones, is posing a persistent challenge in implementing digital skills development programs. Many participants are relying on shared or borrowed devices, limiting their consistent engagement with training modules. Additionally, some participants are struggling with basic technical skills, making it

- **Motivation and Commitment:** While some participants may be highly motivated to improve their skills and employability, others may struggle to maintain consistent engagement due to external pressures, such as familial responsibilities, work obligations, or a lack of immediate tangible outcomes.
- **Socio-Economic Factors:** Participants from lower socio-economic backgrounds often have less time and fewer resources

2. Affordability

Affordability of internet services and digital devices is another major barrier. Participants from economically disadvantaged backgrounds often find it challenging to afford the necessary tools and services required for full engagement with digital programs.

- **Device Costs:** The affordability of smartphones, tablets, and computers also impacts participants' ability to access digital training. While mobile-friendly platforms can increase accessibility, not all participants can afford even basic smartphones, which limits their ability to participate fully in the programs.

difficult to navigate digital platforms and fully benefit from these programs.

4. Variations in Participant Engagement

Variations in participant engagement levels are often influenced by several factors, including individual motivation, external responsibilities, and socio-economic conditions.

to dedicate to training programs. The need to balance work, education, and family responsibilities can affect their ability to fully engage with digital interventions.

- **Cultural and Gender Norms:** In some cases, cultural and gender norms can influence engagement levels, particularly among young women. Social expectations and traditional roles may limit the time and freedom available to participate in training sessions, creating additional barriers to full engagement.

4.3 Gender Transformative Approach

Digital skills programs that adopt a gender-transformative approach are essential for addressing the unique challenges faced by young women and for challenging traditional gender norms. The following lessons highlight the effective strategies that can be implemented to create more inclusive and empowering environments for women in such programs.

Strategy	Lesson	Example
Importance of Targeted Outreach	Targeted outreach and recruitment strategies are crucial to ensure gender balance in digital skills programs. By highlighting the success stories of female participants and emphasizing the benefits of digital skills for women, programs can attract and engage more women.	In Indonesia, showcasing the success of female alumni in outreach materials inspired more young women to join the program.
Designing Gender-Sensitive Curricula	Developing a curriculum that addresses the specific challenges and needs of women in the job market is essential for their empowerment. This includes training on building confidence, leadership, and navigating gender biases in the workplace.	Both countries integrated modules that taught women how to navigate gender.
Creating a Supportive Learning Environment	Providing a safe and supportive learning environment encourages greater participation and retention of women in digital SOYEE projects. Female mentors and trainers play a significant role in this.	The presence of female mentors in Indonesia provided role models and a support system for young women, enhancing their learning experience and retention rates.
Flexible Learning Options	Flexibility in program design, such as adjustable learning schedules, helps accommodate the diverse needs of women, particularly those with additional responsibilities like caregiving.	In the Philippines, flexible learning schedules allowed more young women to participate, balancing their training with other responsibilities.
Community and Family Engagement	Engaging families and communities is vital to support women's participation in digital skills programs. Educating community leaders and family members about the benefits of digital skills for women fosters a more supportive environment.	Community engagement efforts in the Philippines resulted in a more supportive atmosphere for female participants, encouraging higher participation and completion rates.
Empowerment Through Workshops	Workshops focused on empowerment topics such as financial independence, entrepreneurship, and self-advocacy can significantly enhance the confidence and career aspirations of women.	Empowerment workshops in the Philippines helped young women to envision and pursue career paths in traditionally male-dominated fields.

Implementing gender-transformative approaches in digital skills programs is crucial for empowering women and promoting gender equality. By integrating gender-sensitive curricula, creating supportive learning environments, providing flexible learning options, and engaging communities, these programs can significantly enhance the participation and success of women. The lessons learned from these strategies offer valuable insights for future programs aiming to empower women in the digital economy and beyond.

4.4 Scalability and Sustainability

This section explores insights into scaling successful digital solutions and the factors that contribute to or

hinder their long-term sustainability in Digital SOYEE projects.

Scalability of Digital Interventions

Several elements can make digital interventions highly scalable in SOYEE projects. One key feature is the modular and flexible design of digital platforms. These platforms should be created with adaptability in mind, allowing them to be easily tailored to different contexts and user needs. This flexibility enables the program to be replicated in various geographic and socio-economic settings, making it a versatile solution for diverse environments.

Mobile accessibility is another crucial factor contributing to scalability. By ensuring that digital tools are mobile-friendly, projects can leverage the widespread use of smartphones among the youth. This is particularly important in regions where access to computers is limited but mobile phone penetration is high, allowing more participants to engage with the training programs.

Tailoring digital training modules to local languages and cultural contexts enhances their relevance and effectiveness. This localization is essential for scalability, as it ensures that the content resonates with and is accessible to a broader audience. By adapting content to local needs, the program becomes more effective and widely accepted.

Strong partnerships with local organizations, government agencies, and private sector entities provide the necessary support and resources to expand the reach of digital interventions. These collaborations demonstrate a scalable model of cooperation, leveraging various strengths and resources to enhance the program's impact and sustainability.

A data-driven approach, utilizing real-time monitoring and evaluation tools, is vital for

continuous improvement and adaptation of the program. This approach ensures that interventions remain effective and can be scaled up based on insights and feedback. By continuously assessing and refining the program, the SOYEE project can maintain its relevance and effectiveness, supporting its scalability.

Factors Contributing to Sustainability

Sustained institutional support from both government and non-governmental organizations is critical for the long-term success of digital interventions. This support encompasses policy backing, funding, and the integration of digital solutions into existing educational and employment frameworks. Aligning the program with governmental priorities and securing consistent support from NGOs provides a stable foundation that promotes continued relevance and effectiveness.

Continuous training and capacity building for local staff and partners are essential to maintaining and adapting digital interventions over time. By providing ongoing support and professional development, local teams can better understand and address the evolving needs of participants. This approach not only enhances the sustainability of digital solutions but also ensures they are deeply embedded in the local context, making them more effective and resilient.

Financial viability is another crucial factor for sustainability. Ensuring financial sustainability through diverse funding sources, such as public funding, private sector investment, and community contributions, is essential. Developing a clear financial model that outlines costs and potential revenue streams can help maintain the program's operations in the long term. This multi-faceted approach to funding reduces the risk of dependency on a single source and provides a more stable financial footing.

Investing in robust and reliable technological infrastructure is fundamental to the sustainability of digital solutions. This includes ensuring consistent internet connectivity, access to digital devices, and technical support for users. A solid technological foundation allows participants to fully engage with digital interventions and supports the program's overall effectiveness.

Community engagement is vital for the longevity of digital interventions. Engaging the community and fostering a sense of ownership among participants and local stakeholders contributes to sustained interest and support. Community buy-in helps ensure that digital solutions are seen as valuable and relevant, encouraging continuous use and adaptation. This local involvement is crucial for creating a supportive environment that champions the program's objectives and provides direct employment opportunities for participants.

Factors Hindering Sustainability

Inadequate technological infrastructure, such as poor internet connectivity and lack of access to digital devices, can limit the effectiveness and reach of digital interventions. Addressing these technological barriers is crucial for sustainability, as reliable access to the internet and necessary

devices is fundamental for participants to fully engage with digital solutions. Maintaining infrastructure ensures that technological barriers will not pose a challenge to the project's longevity.

Socio-cultural resistance, particularly around gender norms, can affect the acceptance and effectiveness of gender-transformative approaches. Resistance to change and deeply ingrained socio-cultural barriers may hinder the program's ability to empower young women and challenge traditional gender roles. Overcoming these barriers requires persistent community engagement and education to shift perceptions and create a more supportive environment for gender equality.

Finally, dependency on external support can jeopardize the sustainability of digital interventions. Over-reliance on external funding and resources makes the program vulnerable to disruptions if such support is withdrawn. Developing local capacity and securing diversified funding sources are essential to mitigate this risk and ensure the program's long-term viability. By fostering local ownership and building a resilient financial model, the program can better withstand changes in external support and continue to thrive.

4.5 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement plays a crucial role in the success and sustainability of Digital SOYEE projects. The involvement of various stakeholders, including youth participants, Plan International staff, local partners, and private sector entities, is instrumental in the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of digital interventions. This section reflects on the role of local partnerships and stakeholder involvement, highlighting lessons learned from this collaborative approach.

Local Partnerships

Local partnerships are central to the success of digital interventions. Collaborating with community-based organizations, government agencies, and educational institutions ensures that digital solutions are contextually relevant and culturally appropriate. These partnerships facilitate access to local knowledge and resources, enhancing the program's effectiveness and reach. For example, local organizations can

provide valuable insights into the specific needs and challenges faced by the youth in their communities, allowing the project to tailor its interventions accordingly.

Youth Engagement

Engaging with the youth participants is another critical aspect of stakeholder involvement. Prioritizing the voices and experiences of the young people the program aims to empower is

key, incorporating their feedback into program design and delivery. This participatory approach not only improves the relevance of the training modules but also fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among the participants. Youth involvement in the program's development helps ensure that digital solutions are user-friendly and aligned with their aspirations and goals.

Role of Plan International Staff

Plan International staff play a pivotal role in coordinating and managing these projects. Their expertise in program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation is essential for maintaining the quality and consistency of interventions. Staff members facilitate communication between different stakeholders, ensuring that feedback and insights are shared and acted upon. This

Lessons Learned

- **Value of Local Partnerships:** Collaborating with local organizations and institutions is essential for the contextual relevance and sustainability of digital interventions. These partnerships ensure that solutions are culturally appropriate and address the specific needs of target communities.
- **Importance of Youth Engagement:** Involving youth participants in the program's design and implementation enhances its relevance and effectiveness. Their feedback and active participation foster a sense of ownership and improve the overall user experience.
- **Role of Continuous Communication:** Effective stakeholder engagement requires ongoing communication and collaboration. Regular feedback loops and open channels of communication help address challenges promptly and ensure that the program remains adaptive and responsive to stakeholder needs.
- **Leveraging Private Sector Expertise:** Engaging private sector stakeholders brings in valuable resources, technical support, and industry expertise. These partnerships can enhance the quality of digital interventions.

By fostering strong local partnerships, involving youth participants, leveraging the expertise of Plan International staff, and engaging with private sector entities, Digital SOYEE projects can create robust and adaptable programs that address the needs of their target audiences and achieve significant positive outcomes.

4.6 Continuous Improvement and Adaptation

Continuous improvement and adaptation are fundamental to the success of Digital SOYEE (Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship) projects by Plan International. Regular monitoring and evaluation (M&E) play a crucial role in ensuring that digital interventions remain effective, relevant, and responsive to the needs of participants. By systematically gathering and analyzing data,

continuous dialogue helps address challenges promptly and adapt the program to changing needs and contexts.

Private Sector Partnerships

Private sector stakeholders also contribute significantly to the success of Digital SOYEE projects. Companies and technology providers can offer technical support, funding, and resources, enhancing the digital infrastructure and capabilities of the program. Their involvement brings innovative solutions and industry expertise, which are crucial for developing cutting-edge training modules and tools. Additionally, private sector partnerships provide valuable opportunities for job placements and internships, directly benefiting youth participants by linking them to potential employers.

project teams can make informed decisions, promptly address challenges, and refine program strategies and content.

The importance of regular M&E in Digital SOYEE projects cannot be overstated. Through ongoing assessment, projects can track progress, measure impact, and identify areas for improvement. This process involves collecting quantitative data, such as participation rates and completion metrics, as well as qualitative feedback from participants, trainers, and partners. A comprehensive M&E framework allows teams to evaluate both the immediate and long-term effects of digital interventions, ensuring that programs continuously evolve to meet their goals.

Examples of Continuous Improvement

One example of how continuous learning and adaptation can improve program outcomes is the iterative refinement of digital training platforms. Initially, feedback from participants may indicate that some training modules are too advanced for those with limited digital literacy. In response, the project team could develop introductory courses focused on basic computer skills and online navigation. This adjustment not only makes the content more accessible but also increases participant confidence and engagement, leading to higher completion rates.

Another instance of successful adaptation could involve modifying training schedules to better accommodate the needs of young women with caregiving responsibilities. Early evaluations might reveal that fixed schedules often conflict with participants' other commitments, resulting in lower attendance. By introducing flexible learning options and offering offline resources, projects can enhance accessibility and ensure that more participants benefit from the training. Such changes can be particularly impactful in regions where flexible schedules significantly boost female participation and completion rates.

Projects can also benefit from the integration of real-time feedback mechanisms. Participants should be encouraged to provide ongoing feedback through surveys, focus groups, and direct communication with trainers. This real-time feedback allows project teams to make timely adjustments to the curriculum and delivery methods. For example, if participants report difficulties with certain technical terms, the team can quickly revise the materials to include more explanatory notes and practical examples, improving overall comprehension and learning outcomes.

Key Adaptations

- **Enhanced Training Modules:** If initial feedback indicates that certain modules are too advanced, introducing introductory courses on basic digital literacy can make the content more accessible and increase participant engagement and completion rates.
- **Flexible Learning Options:** Adapting training schedules to accommodate participants' varying commitments, especially for those with caregiving responsibilities, can result in higher attendance and completion rates. Offering offline resources further improves accessibility.

Importance of Continuous Improvement and Adaptation

Continuous improvement and adaptation are integral to the success of Digital SOYEE projects. Regular monitoring and evaluation enable projects to stay responsive to participant needs, refine their strategies, and enhance the effectiveness of digital interventions. By fostering a culture of continuous learning, Plan International can address immediate challenges while building a robust framework for sustained impact and scalability in its Digital SOYEE initiatives.

4.7 Community and Peer Support

Fostering a supportive community and robust peer networks was a key factor in the success of various projects. The implementation of these social support structures significantly enhanced the programs' impact by providing participants with encouragement, shared learning opportunities, and a sense of belonging. These efforts resulted in increased engagement, improved learning outcomes, and greater overall satisfaction among participants.

Key Lessons:

1. **Enhanced Engagement and Retention:** The sense of belonging and mutual support within peer groups played a crucial role in enhancing participant engagement and retention. Being part of a community where others faced similar challenges motivated participants to persevere, even when difficulties arose.
2. **Increased Confidence and Skill Development:** Participants demonstrated increased confidence and enhanced skill development through their engagement in the program. The exposure to practical, industry-relevant experiences helped participants build relevant skills, significantly improving their employability and entrepreneurial abilities.
3. **Mentorship:** Personalized guidance from industry professionals played a crucial role in the learning experience. Mentorship initiatives provided participants with valuable insights and support, contributing to their overall growth. However, it is important to analyze the effectiveness of these mentorship interventions separately to fully understand their specific impact on outcomes for youth.
4. **Importance of Community and Peer Support:** The collective experiences from these projects underscored the vital role of community and peer support in enhancing the effectiveness of training programs. By creating collaborative learning environments and offering mentorship opportunities, participants received the necessary support to navigate their educational and career paths successfully. This not only improved individual outcomes but also contributed to building a resilient and empowered community ready to contribute to local economies.

The lessons learned from integrating community and peer support across projects highlight the importance of fostering social support structures in training programs. By encouraging collaboration, mentorship, and a sense of community, these projects were able to enhance participant engagement, confidence, and overall success, providing valuable insights for future initiatives aimed at empowering youth and improving educational and employment outcomes.

4.8 Innovative Technologies

The integration of innovative technologies and digital platforms was a defining feature across multiple projects, significantly enhancing their effectiveness and reach. By leveraging cutting-edge tools and methods, these projects were able to provide quality training, facilitate real-time engagement, and deliver personalized learning experiences.

Key Lessons:

1. **Enhanced Engagement and Learning Outcomes:** The incorporation of gamification and mobile-friendly platforms across the projects significantly increased participant engagement and improved learning outcomes. Making the content accessible and interactive encouraged continuous participation and deeper learning.

2. **Adaptive Program Management:** The use of real-time monitoring and evaluation tools allowed for adaptive program management. The ability to track progress and gather feedback in real-time enabled project teams to make timely adjustments, ensuring that interventions remained effective and relevant.
3. **Balanced Use of Social Media:** The strategic use of various social media platforms across projects helped maintain high visibility and participant engagement. Each platform catered to different aspects of outreach and community-building efforts, enhancing overall program effectiveness.

The experience across these projects underscores the transformative potential of innovative technologies in digital training programs. By integrating advanced e-learning platforms, ensuring mobile accessibility, and leveraging real-time data tools, the projects were able to deliver quality, flexible, and engaging training. These lessons highlight the importance of using adaptive and user-friendly technologies to enhance program effectiveness and participant satisfaction, offering valuable insights for future initiatives seeking to utilize technology to empower youth and improve educational and employment outcomes.

4.9 Towards a Digital SOYEE Framework

As Plan International expands its digital programs within the SOYEE framework, it is crucial to incorporate comprehensive and practical strategies that address current challenges and future opportunities. By building on lessons learned from previous projects, we can create a robust digital SOYEE framework. This framework will enhance the effectiveness, accessibility, and sustainability of future initiatives, equipping Plan International with the tools to deliver impactful, scalable digital interventions. Ultimately, this will empower youth, especially young women, to achieve their educational and career goals in an increasingly digital landscape.

1. **Establish Community-Based Access Points:** Setting up centers with reliable internet and digital devices in local communities can provide participants with alternative means of accessing training, especially in areas with poor connectivity.
2. **Flexible Learning Options:** Offering flexible schedules and offline resources will accommodate participants with varying availability, enhancing accessibility and completion rates.
3. **Enhance Technical Support Services:** Providing ongoing technical support is crucial to assist participants in navigating digital platforms and resolving any technical issues they may encounter. This can include establishing a helpdesk, offering regular troubleshooting workshops, and providing accessible online resources and FAQs.
4. **Facilitate Access to Digital Devices:** Partner with local businesses, NGOs, and government agencies to create programs that supply digital devices to participants who need them. This can include initiatives like device donation programs, rental services, or subsidies for purchasing equipment.
5. **Create Online Resource Libraries:** Develop comprehensive online resource libraries that include tutorials, practice exercises, and supplementary learning materials. These resources should be easily accessible and cover a wide range of topics to support participants' diverse learning needs.
6. **Implement Blended Learning Models:** Combining online and face-to-face training can enhance the learning experience by providing flexibility while ensuring personal interaction and support. Blended learning models can cater to

different learning styles and help reinforce digital skills through practical, hands-on experiences.

7. **Promote Inclusive Content**

Design: Ensure that all digital content is designed with inclusivity in mind, considering accessibility features such as text-to-speech, subtitles, and easy-to-read formats. This approach will accommodate participants with disabilities and other special needs.

8. **Develop Career Guidance and**

Support Services: Establish career guidance services that offer personalized advice, job matching, and ongoing support for participants transitioning into employment. This can include career counseling, workshops on job searching

strategies, and networking events with potential employers.

9. **Conduct Regular Stakeholder**

Workshops: Organize workshops with all stakeholders, including participants, trainers, local partners, and private sector representatives, to gather feedback and share best practices. These workshops can facilitate continuous learning and collaboration, ensuring that the program evolves to meet emerging needs.

10. **Expand Outreach and Awareness**

Campaigns: Implement targeted outreach campaigns to raise awareness about the program and its benefits. Utilize various media channels, including social media, radio, and community events, to reach a broader audience and encourage participation.

By integrating these comprehensive digital strategies into the SOYEE framework, Plan International can create a more inclusive, adaptive, and effective digital training environment. These approaches address the technical and infrastructural challenges while emphasizing the importance of community engagement, flexible learning, and continuous support. Establishing community-based access points, offering flexible learning options, and enhancing technical support services will ensure participants have reliable access to training resources. Facilitating access to digital devices, creating online resource libraries, and implementing blended learning models will enrich the learning experience. Promoting inclusive content design and developing career guidance services will accommodate diverse needs and support participants' career transitions. Conducting regular stakeholder workshops and expanding outreach campaigns will foster continuous learning and broaden program reach. As Plan International moves forward with its digital SOYEE initiatives, these comprehensive measures will be pivotal in empowering youth, particularly young women, to overcome barriers and achieve their full potential in the digital economy. By doing so, Plan International will be well-positioned to foster long-term, sustainable impacts that transform the lives of young people around the world.

5. Conclusion

This evaluation offers critical insights into the future development and implementation of digital interventions within Plan International's SOYEE framework. The findings underscore the transformative potential of digital tools and platforms in enhancing the digital literacy, confidence, and employability of youth, particularly young women. By effectively integrating these digital solutions with traditional educational and employment initiatives, Plan International has demonstrated the ability to create programs that are not only impactful but also scalable and relevant to the needs of today's job market.

By focusing on local needs and leveraging technology to overcome barriers such as gender inequality, unemployment, and the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, these initiatives have not only achieved their immediate objectives but also laid the groundwork for long-term, sustainable impact.

The evaluation highlights the importance of addressing challenges such as connectivity issues and access to digital tools, which are crucial for ensuring the broad reach and inclusivity of these programs. Additionally, the importance of local partnerships, continuous improvement, and gender-inclusive strategies was emphasized as key components in the design and

implementation of successful digital interventions. By fostering strong collaborations with local stakeholders and continuously adapting to the evolving digital landscape, Plan International can optimize the impact of its SOYEE digital solutions, ensuring they are sustainable and capable of reaching a diverse audience.

The recommendations provided in the evaluation offer a roadmap for strengthening Plan International's digital interventions. These include enhancing digital infrastructure, promoting gender equality, developing scalable program models, and ensuring a commitment to continuous improvement. By implementing these strategies, Plan International can further empower youth, bridge the digital divide, and support the next generation in accessing the education and employment opportunities necessary to thrive in the digital economy.

In conclusion, the insights gained from this evaluation offer valuable guidance for the future development and implementation of digital interventions within the SOYEE framework. Plan International is well-positioned to continue leading the way in youth empowerment through innovative digital solutions, ultimately creating a more inclusive and equitable digital landscape for all.



6. Recommendations

A. Recommendations to Continue:

- **Enhance Digital Infrastructure:**
Continue the efforts to improve internet connectivity and access to digital tools for marginalized individuals. Building deeper partnerships with technology providers and government agencies will strengthen these initiatives. Continuing to explore innovative solutions, such as community Wi-Fi and mobile hotspots, will help ensure underserved regions gain critical access.
- **Strengthen Local Partnerships:**
Maintain and build upon the existing collaborations with local organizations, government entities, and the private sector. Developing structured frameworks for engaging stakeholders throughout program design and implementation will foster greater commitment and ownership. These alliances can enhance resource sharing, leverage expertise, and ensure that programs remain relevant and impactful. Collaborative efforts will drive collective action toward common goals, leading to sustained positive outcomes for youth.
- **Implement Scalable and Flexible Models:**
Continue to create flexible digital solutions tailored to various contexts and adapt these based on participant feedback. Focusing on refining modular content will ensure diverse learning needs are met. Keeping an eye on advanced technologies, such as AI-driven personalization, will enhance the customization of learning experiences.
- **Adopt Continuous Improvement and Adaptation:**
Keep utilizing established monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess program impact. Continuing to increase the frequency of participant feedback sessions and enhancing the digital feedback platform will enable real-time adjustments and ongoing improvements based on participant experiences.
- **Integrate Gender Equality in Program Design:**
Continue to ensure that gender equality is integrated throughout all program components. This involves designing educational materials, training modules, and mentoring initiatives that prioritize gender-sensitive approaches. By fostering inclusive environments, programs can empower both young women and men to access equal opportunities in education and employment.
- **Implement Blended Learning Models:**
By utilizing blended learning models, Plan International has enriched the learning experience for participants. To maximize the effectiveness of these approaches, evaluating current blended learning methods through participant surveys and performance metrics can provide valuable insights. Additionally, experimenting with hybrid formats—such as virtual reality or gamified learning experiences—could further engage participants and enhance their learning journey.

B. Areas for Improvement:

- **Provide Basic Digital Literacy Training:**
While basic digital literacy training is currently offered, there is a need to expand resources to include advanced digital skills. Enhancing the training curriculum to prepare participants for the

job market is essential. A mentorship program that pairs tech-savvy volunteers with participants can provide personalized support and bridge the digital skills gap.

- **Offer Flexible Learning Options:** Currently, there are efforts to provide adjustable schedules and offline resources; however, continuous enhancement is needed based on participant feedback. Developing a mobile app could streamline access to resources and allow participants to schedule sessions and track their progress, improving engagement and convenience.
- **Continue the Promotion of Gender-Inclusive Strategies:** While there are tailored digital learning modules and mentorship programs for young women, the feedback mechanisms addressing gender-specific challenges need to be strengthened. Building these mechanisms will ensure initiatives remain relevant. Launching awareness campaigns to engage young men as allies in promoting gender equality will create a more inclusive environment.
- **Enhance Digital Access and Inclusion:** Make it a priority to improve digital access and inclusion for youth, particularly those in remote areas. Develop mobile-first, lightweight digital solutions that are

accessible even in low-bandwidth environments. Collaborate with telecom companies and local internet providers to enhance connectivity, ensuring youth can effectively access online resources and training materials. Additionally, create offline-capable resources to engage those without stable internet.

- **Introduce Career Guidance and Mentoring Programs:** Develop programs focused on career guidance that offer tailored support for participants exploring various career paths. This initiative could include workshops, resume-building sessions, and mock interviews, supplemented by mentorship opportunities that connect participants with industry professionals.
- **Foster Community and Peer Support:** Establish structured peer support systems to enhance community building among participants. While digital platforms are currently used to connect individuals, improving the facilitation of these networks is crucial. Organizing regular online and offline community events or forums will provide valuable opportunities for networking and experience sharing, especially for young women in male-dominated fields.

C. Areas to Start Doing:

- **Educate and Build an Enabling Environment for Green Entrepreneurship:** Introduce educational initiatives focused on green entrepreneurship as a core component of programs. Implement workshops, mentorship, and networking opportunities that promote environmentally sustainable business practices. Cultivating an enabling environment for green entrepreneurship empowers young people to develop innovative solutions to environmental challenges while pursuing sustainable livelihoods.

- **Encourage Gender-Sensitive Career Guidance:** Implement gender-sensitive career guidance programs that promote diverse career pathways for young women. Provide targeted support and resources that address the unique challenges faced by young women in the workforce. This approach will contribute to reducing gender disparities in employment and support broader goals of gender equality within the labor market.
- **Develop Youth-Centered Mentorship Models:** Focus on establishing and nurturing youth-centered mentorship models that

prioritize the recruitment and training of qualified mentors. These mentors should be equipped to guide youth through the challenges and opportunities in entrepreneurship and employment.

Personalized mentorship is crucial for building confidence and resilience among young people, facilitating their growth in a supportive environment.

Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

Criteria	Questions	Indicator(s)	Data Source
Relevance	To what extent are the digital solutions relevant to the needs, interests and capacities of the target group (including diverse young people living with vulnerabilities)? How were the digital solutions adapted to the needs of the target groups? To what extent are the digital solutions relevant to the context of the communities and areas of work of the targeted young people? What are the perspectives of the target young people, trainers and Plan International staff of the digital solutions in terms of their relevance to achieve SOYEE outcomes?	1. Proportion of target youth, with a focus on young women, reporting that the digital solutions address their specific needs and interests, and equip them with relevant skills for decent work and entrepreneurship 2. Percentage of digital solution features that directly address in-demand skills for jobs in the target communities, considering gender-specific needs. 3. Percentage of respondents perceiving high alignment of digital solutions with specific SOYEE objectives, such as skill development, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurship support. 4. Percentage of young people who report feeling confident about their life skills at the end of the training	1. SOYEE Resources (SOYEE AOGD Package) 2. Past SOYEE Evaluation Reports 3. Target young people, trainers and Plan International
Coherence	What internal and external interventions, priorities and conditions (e.g. infrastructure, connectivity or contextual factors) should be considered for digital SOYEE programming?	1. Percentage of the target population with access to digital infrastructure, including internet connectivity and technology devices, meeting the minimum requirements for effective participation in SOYEE programming. 2. Percentage of key internal interventions, priorities, and conditions addressed in the program design documents for successful implementation of digital SOYEE programming.	1. SOYEE Evaluation reports 2. Plan International Strategy documents 3. UNICEFs GenU Tech Resources 4. Plan International Staff

Effectiveness	To what extent did the digital SOYEE programmes achieve the expected outcomes (or any unintended outcomes) in terms of skills and employment/entrepreneurship? How can the quality of the digital solutions be improved? How can SOYEE interventions be improved by using digital solutions? To what extent do the digital solutions effectively achieve results for diverse young people (particularly young women) and strengthen gender equality?	1. Percentage of young people in wage employment within 6 months after SOYEE training or activity 2. Percentage of young people engaged in self-employment within 6 months of SOYEE training or activity 3. Number and actionable level of recommendations for improvement based on user feedback. 4. Percentage increase in the number of young women who participate in SOYEE activities 5. Percentage of young people who demonstrate entrepreneurship competencies at the end of the training 6. Percentage of young people who demonstrate vocational competencies at the end of the training	1. SOYEE Evaluation reports 2. Target groups 3. UNICEFs GenU Tech Resources
Scalability	What is the potential for scaling the digital SOYEE solutions? What are the contextual, technological, operational, financial/funding models, and social factors to consider taking digital solutions from pilot to scale?	1. Percentage of stakeholders engaged in collaboration efforts for scaling digital SOYEE solutions, indicating the level of support and commitment from key partners. 2. Percentage of contextual factors presenting significant challenges for scaling the solutions. 3. Percentage of the target population expressing interest in using the digital SOYEE solutions at scale. 4. Percentage of key stakeholders actively involved in planning for scaling digital SOYEE solutions 5. Percentage of operational aspects in place to support large-scale implementation.	1. UNICEF GenU Tech resources 2. SOYEE program documents 3. Plan International Strategy Documents 4. Plan International Staff
Sustainability	To what extent do the digital solutions support the sustainability of long term benefits to the targeted young people and community after completion of the project?	1. Percentage of young people who remain in wage or self-employment for 1 month or more 2. Percentage of young people who remain in wage or self-employment for 6 months or more	1. SOYEE program documents 2. Target groups

Annex 2: Key Informant Interview Guides

This is attached as a separate document.

Annex 3: FGD Guide

This is attached as a separate document.

Annex 4: Overview of Sampled Projects

Wired4Work! – Yes! Digital Ecosystem

Project Title and Main Objectives	Title: Wired4Work!- YES! Digital Ecosystem (Indonesia/Philippines) Overview: • Empowerment through Education: Both countries focused on empowering marginalized youth, particularly young women, by providing them access to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) through innovative digital platforms. • Skills Enhancement: Indonesia aimed to enhance skills acquisition through a blended learning model that combines e-learning with face-to-face mentorship, while the Philippines emphasized engaging youth through scalable digital solutions to increase their capacity for employment and entrepreneurship, adapting training delivery to digital and remote methods due to COVID-19 restrictions.
Project Duration	<u>Indonesia:</u> January 2018 - September 2021 <u>Philippines:</u> January 2018 – October 2021
Digital Interventions	• Indonesia: ◦ Developed e-learning models for various TVET packages including soft skills, gender-focused life skills, and market-oriented vocational training. ◦ Utilized digital platforms and tools to engage training graduates and monitor their progress, with a focus on integrating these systems into government and private sector vocational training frameworks. ◦ Engaged in partnerships with the Ministry of Manpower to scale up training solutions and enhance the recruitment, training, and placement processes through digital interventions. • Philippines: ◦ Implemented the YES!Academy (Y!A), a comprehensive digital platform used for delivering a range of online training and educational content.

	○ Offered various e-learning courses such as Life Skills, Alternative Learning School Reviewer, Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar (PEOS), and Community-Based Enterprise Development (CBED) training. ○ Transitioned to blended and entirely digital training methods due to COVID-19, with substantial content delivered online to continue education and training programs amid physical distancing measures.
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Tech Muda I

Project Overview	
Project Title and Main Objectives	Title: Tech Muda I (Indonesia) Overview: ● Skill Development: Train 150 disadvantaged youth aged 18-29, ensuring at least 70% participation from women, in market-driven IT and employability skills. ● Employment Placement: Place at least 80% of the graduates in full-time IT-related jobs or self-employment opportunities, ensuring these positions offer minimum wage and above with benefits. ● Capacity Building: Enhance the institutional capacity of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Centers (BLKs) in partnership with the Center for Vocational and Extension Service Training (CEVEST), Ministry of Manpower, industry associations, HR forums, and startup networks.
Project Duration	November 1, 2018 - October 31, 2020
Digital Interventions	● Online Training Platforms: Utilized platforms like YES! Academy for ongoing learning, Google Forms for feedback, and Zoom for live sessions, supporting interactive learning and real-time communication. ● Web Development Platforms: Employed tools such as WordPress for teaching website creation and management. ● Communication Tools: Used WhatsApp groups for informal communications and email for formal communications, distributing materials and updates on training schedules. ● Mentorship and Job Fairs: Implemented a comprehensive mentorship program followed by virtual job fairs to connect participants with potential employers.

Fit for the Future

Project Overview	
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Project Title and Main Objectives	Title: Fit for the Future (Vietnam) Overview: • Improve workforce readiness for disadvantaged youth, particularly young women, in the IT sector. • Increase participation of young women in IT education and job markets, thereby reducing the gender gap in technology and enhancing economic empowerment. • Sensitize and orient 1600 youth on IT vocational education, job opportunities, and gender equality, with at least 800 disadvantaged youth enrolled in quality IT training courses. • Ensure these youth secure quality employment post-training, with businesses providing internships or hiring graduates.
Project Duration	September 1, 2018, to September 30, 2022. The project was originally planned for three years but was extended by an additional year and one month due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Digital Interventions	• YES! ME System: An IT-supported mobile tracking system crucial for collecting reliable data on graduates' job retention and satisfaction, enabling real-time monitoring of socio-economic improvements of participants after they complete their training. • E-learning Materials: Utilization of e-learning platforms for IT courses, including graphic design, 3D modeling, and web coding, though specific platforms were not detailed. • Digital Tools for Training Delivery: Integration of digital tools and platforms to deliver course content effectively, including software for graphic design and coding environments for web development training. • Communication and Engagement: Using social media and web pages to communicate with participants and stakeholders is crucial for promoting program visibility and participant recruitment.

Saksham PLUS

Project Overview	
Project Title and Main Objectives	Title: Saksham PLUS (India; specifically urban areas and rural areas of Delhi NCR and Rajasthan) Overview: • To enable 2,900 youth (60% women) from disadvantaged communities to secure decent employment. • To enable 750 youth (60% women) to access entrepreneurship training and become self-employed. • To enhance economic participation and independence of young women. • To provide digital skills to youth to improve learning outcomes and employability.

Project Duration	2017 - 2021, extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic
Digital Interventions	• Platforms Used: Google Classroom, Moodle for training delivery; WhatsApp and Zoom for communication and live sessions. • Digital Tools: E-learning modules developed for vocational training, digital literacy, and life skills.

The Smart-Up Factory Project

Project Overview	
Project Title and Main Objectives	Title: Smart-Up Factory Youth Innovative Project Ethiopia SmartUp Factory Scale-up Uganda Overview: • Ethiopia: ○ To create youth-friendly, inclusive spaces. ○ To enhance the capacities of marginalized youth through training and mentoring. ○ To establish networks supporting youth social entrepreneurship. ○ To empower youth to take ownership of Smart-Up factory operations. • Uganda: ○ To create inclusive, inspiring, and safe spaces for innovation and skill development. ○ To support young individuals in networking and gaining employment. ○ To strengthen the leadership capacity of youth, especially girls.
Project Duration	Ethiopia: January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2021 Uganda: Start and end dates were not specified.
Digital Interventions	• Ethiopia: ○ Utilization of digital tools such as educational servers, laptops, interactive projectors, and potentially coding and web development software.

	Integration of these tools in training sessions to enhance ICT skills, support idea development, and improve collaboration among participants.
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Digitalization and E-Banking for Savings Groups in the municipalities of Dogbo and Klouékanmè

Project Overview	
Project Title and Main Objectives	Title: Digitalization and E-Banking for Savings Groups in the municipalities of Dogbo and Klouékanmè (Benin - Communes of Dogbo and Klouékanmè, Couffo Department) Overview: - To increase the socio-economic resilience of members of Youth Savings and Loans Associations (AJE&C) in the Couffo department. - To promote financial inclusion and autonomy among young women and men by integrating mobile phone technology for savings and credit transactions.
Project Duration	May 3, 2021, to March 31, 2022
Digital Interventions	- Provision of Mobile Phones: 555 mobile phones were distributed to facilitate digital transactions. - Training on Mobile Banking and Financial Literacy: Members were trained to manage savings and credit transactions using mobile phones. - Partnerships with GSM Operators: Ensured integration of mobile banking services for seamless financial transactions. - Mobile Money Platforms: Utilized for savings and loan transactions, enabling better management of financial activities. - Establishment of Transfer Centers: 10 transfer centers were set up to aid in the digital transactions and data collection related to financial operations.

Affordable Internet Access & Life Skills for Youth in Koforidua

Project Overview	
Project Title and Main Objectives	Title: Affordable Internet Access & Life Skills for Youth in Koforidua (Ghana) Overview: To enhance the opportunities for young people by improving their access to the internet and technology for educational purposes.

	To develop ICT skills and economic empowerment through better learning outcomes and increased internet accessibility, particularly targeting technical and vocational education and training (TVET) schools and out-of-school youth.
Project Duration	February 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022
Digital Interventions	- Robust Solar-Powered Wi-Fi Network: Installed at Koforidua Technical Institute (KOTECH) and Hyundai-KOICA Technical Institute (KOICA) to provide widespread internet access. - Local Cloud Platform: Deployed for sharing digital educational materials, business skills, and financial information. - Data Plans: Distribution of mobile data plans to students and selected teachers to enhance their access to digital resources and facilitate remote learning.

Hope Together (Phase II)

Project Overview	
Project Title and Main Objectives	Title: Hope Together - Phase II (Egypt; Damietta and Alexandria) Overview: - To improve the economic self-reliance and social integration of 2000 Syrian refugees and vulnerable Egyptian host community members. - To enhance skills development supporting income-generating activities and facilitating access to microfinance. - To promote gender equality and positive engagement in local communities, emphasizing activities that encourage mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence between Syrians and Egyptians.
Project Duration	October 1, 2018, to September 30, 2021
Digital Interventions	- Digital Platforms Used: WhatsApp, Zoom, and online learning platforms. - Digital Tools and Activities: - WhatsApp groups for ongoing communication between trainers, mentors, and participants. - Zoom for live training sessions and interactive workshops. - E-learning modules for vocational and life skills training. - Online mentorship programs where experienced mentors provide guidance through digital platforms. - Virtual job fairs to connect participants with potential employers.

PASEWAY Project

Project Overview	
Project Title and Main Objectives	Title: Promoting Youth Employment in Urban Districts in Ethiopia (PASEWAY) Project (Ethiopia; specifically Addis Ababa) Overview: • To enhance the employability of urban youth in Ethiopia by providing vocational training in high-demand sectors and skills for entrepreneurship. • To integrate unemployed and underemployed youth into the labor market and improve their socio-economic status. • To establish and strengthen business incubation centers to support youth entrepreneurship.
Project Duration	August 2019 to April 2023
Digital Interventions	• E-learning Platforms: Utilized for vocational training and skills development, supporting remote learning and access to educational content. • Digital Management Tools: Employed for project coordination and monitoring activities, streamlining data collection and analysis. • Virtual Job Fairs: Facilitated connections between trained youth and potential employers, overcoming geographical and logistical barriers. • Online Mentorship Programs: Provided continuous support and guidance to participants, enhancing their professional development and entrepreneurial ventures.

Young People Lead Stabilization Efforts in the Lake Chad Basin

Project Overview	
Project Title and Main Objectives	Title: Young People Lead Stabilization Efforts in the Lake Chad Basin (Nigeria; Mafa Local Government Area, Borno State) Overview: • To empower young people, particularly females, to participate effectively in peacebuilding, community development, and post-conflict reconstruction. • To enhance the capacity of youth to monitor stabilization drivers and promote peaceful coexistence. • To create awareness among duty bearers about the importance of youth participation in peacebuilding.
Project Duration	November 1, 2018, to October 31, 2020

Digital Interventions	• Map-Based Platform: Developed to capture and present data on essential services identified by youth, allowing for monitoring of stabilization drivers. • Digital Tools Used: Google Forms for surveys, Zoom for live training sessions, and WhatsApp groups for informal communication and community support. • Smartphones: Provided to youth for data collection, mapping, and accessing the digital platform.
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SDEPAY Project

Project Overview	
Project Title and Main Objectives	Title: Skills Development and Employment Promotion Among Youth (SDEPAY) Project (Rwanda; Districts of Bugesera, Gatsibo, and Nyaruguru) Overview: • To increase formal youth employment opportunities with decent work in rural and urban areas. • To address youth unemployment by providing training and support for both employment and self-employment. • To enhance the employability of young people through vocational training, the provision of startup kits, support for forming cooperatives, and accessing finance.
Project Duration	2020 to 2023
Digital Interventions	• Open Data Kit (ODK) Tools Platform: Used for survey data collection. • Smartphones: Provided for data collection and access to digital platforms. • Audio Recording Devices and Photography: Used for capturing detailed responses during interviews and for visual documentation.

Bridges to the Future

Project Overview	
Project Title and Main Objectives	Title: Bridges to the Future (Indonesia and Vietnam) Overview: • To mitigate youth unemployment exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic by providing vocational training and job-matching solutions. • To equip young people, particularly women and those with disabilities, with the necessary skills to find stable jobs.

	• To strengthen the capacity of vocational training providers to deliver high-quality, market-driven training.
Project Duration	January 2021 to December 2022
Digital Interventions	• Online Training Platforms: Utilization of the YES! Academy for ongoing learning and various online training modules. • Job Matching Platforms: Online job fairs and workshops using platforms like KORMO Jobs and Top Karir to facilitate job placements and connect young people with potential employers. • Digital Tools for Engagement and Monitoring: Use of social media for outreach, Google Forms for surveys, Microsoft Teams and Zoom for meetings, and data analytics platforms like Power BI for tracking progress and outcomes.

Annex 5: Regional Analysis Report

This is attached as a separate document.



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Until we are all equal

ABOUT PLAN INTERNATIONAL

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organization that advances children's rights and equality for girls. We believe in the power and potential of every child but know this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion, and discrimination. And it is girls who are most affected. Working together with children, young people, supporters, and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges girls and vulnerable children face. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood and we 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 over 85 years, we have rallied other determined optimists to transform the lives of all children in more than 80 countries.

**We won't stop until
we are all equal.**

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