



SUN Business Network Women and Youth Empowerment Strategy's Implementation Guide

About SBN

Since 2010, the SUN Movement has inspired a new way of working collaboratively to end malnutrition, in all its forms. With the governments of 65 SUN Countries in the lead, it unites people – from civil society, the United Nations, donors, businesses and researchers – in a collective effort to improve nutrition. Established in 2012, the SUN Business Network (SBN) is the private sector branch of the SUN Movement and aims to support businesses in growing the role they play in improving nutrition and to support SUN countries in developing national business engagement strategies. SBN is co-convened by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

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Table of contents

1. About the implementation guides	5
2. Women's Empowerment Implementation Guide	6
3. Youth's Empowerment Implementation Guide	18



**SUN Business Network Women and
Youth Empowerment Strategy's
Implementation Guide**

1. About the implementation guides

This implementation guidance complements the youth and women empowerment strategy for the SBN, and it builds on interviews conducted with SBN Country Coordinators, Global Partners, SUN Secretariat, Women and Youth entrepreneurs and others, along with extensive recommendations from literature on how to integrate gender and youth employment and entrepreneurship into business networks for increased nutrition impact¹.

The intent is to inspire SBN teams and partners with operational guides to implement context-specific service support in their networks to help unlock the potential of more youth and women-led businesses and job creation in food systems. The guides draw from existing good practices and lessons learned from SBN programs, as well as the experiences and insights provided by teams in SBN's, GAIN, WFP, and representatives from the different SUN networks.

This implementation guidance presents various options and priority actions for engaging more micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in SUN countries with specific recommendations to be considered in different contexts or situations. Suggested monitoring indicators are provided to track progress in empowering youth and women along the nutritious food value chain. There are examples of relevant stakeholders to foster effective partnerships within different context to maximize synergies.

Overall, this guidance aims to reinforce SBN support services at the global, regional and country levels towards achieving their overarching goal and increased nutrition impact through youth and women empowerment. The document is comprised of two parts: Part one is guidance to enable women's empowerment while Part two focuses on youth empowerment.

Common challenges and mitigating measures for both groups

Prior to focusing on women and youth separately, SBN teams should be aware of the following key challenges and potential measures for consideration while working towards both women and youth empowerment:

- Most SBN members, especially small-scale businesses, expect SBN to support them with investments to achieve their commitments. SBN trainings should aim to support entrepreneurs on achieving their business objectives via filling skill and knowledge gaps, while changing the mindset of expectation of grants.

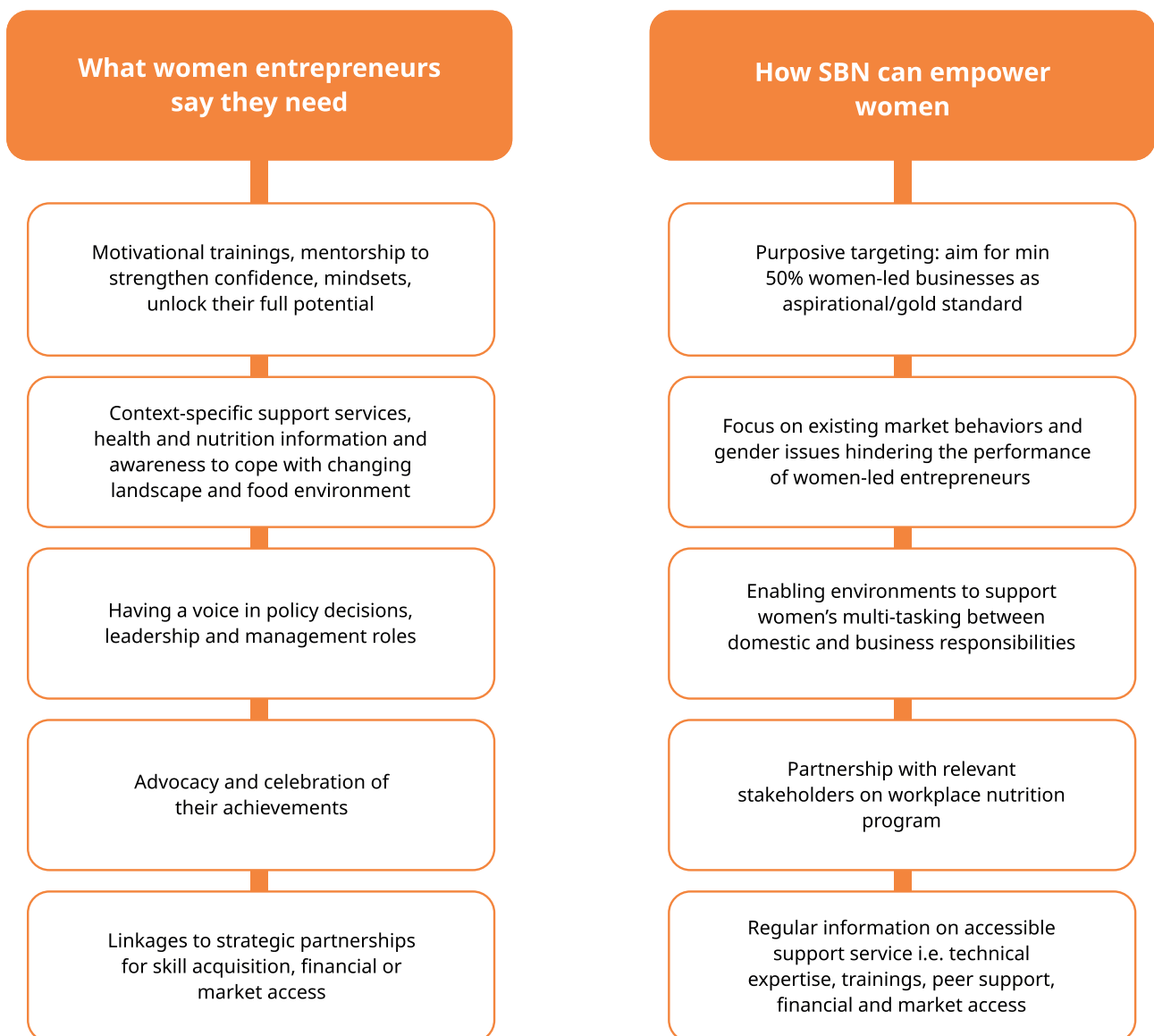
- Linked to the first point, there is an influx of businesses expecting financial support from SBN's to grow their markets. Some of these businesses tend to be unsustainable if they are not supported with financing and SBN's may be constrained with limited funding for direct investments in businesses beyond convenings, events and trainings. This issue could be addressed by exploring partnership with large companies, donors and governments to raise funding and support micro and small businesses.
- The diverse coordinating structures for SBN's in different countries may influence how SBN's expand their memberships to informal and small businesses. Existing structures in the country (such as GAIN or WFP as convener) have different dynamics in engaging with the private sector and varied standards and procedures. To accommodate and empower diverse youth and women groups, there is need for harmonization, flexibility and innovation in engaging with both small and large businesses.
- Dealing with youth and women entrepreneurs may come with the risk of limited business experience and their different expectations in business. The SBN should facilitate linking them to the appropriate partner services and resources such as internship or mentorship programs with government entities, large companies, etc.

¹ Empowering women throughout the food supply chain (gainhealth.org)

2. Women's Empowerment Implementation Guide

Drivers of successful women's empowerment

This section describes the various driving factors and enablers which the SBN team should explore as women empowerment features within their networks, existing programs and new design programs to promote better economic and nutrition impact for women. In addition, SBN teams should explore multiple entry points through strategic partnership with women beyond entrepreneurship — as employees, consumers of nutritious food products. For example, the implementation of workforce nutrition programs can eliminate malnutrition amongst both the employees, and those in the supply chains².



² Building the business case for workforce nutrition - a timeline – Access to Nutrition

How to expand and diversify membership

Here are some approaches to help increase the share of women- led business membership in SBN networks:

▶ No discrimination on business size if it meets the ten SBN engagement requirements and it presents viable business ideas or potential solutions

▶ Priority target on passionate women entrepreneurs who have identified their needs, gaps to an existing market and are seeking scalable and innovative solutions from the network

▶ Deliberate shift from formal businesses to both formal and informal businesses with priority focus on women-led businesses (micro and home-based)

▶ Facilitation of motivational events with objective to encourage women participation and representation

▶ Establishment of regional and sub-national chapters. Convening and organizing meetings at sub-national chapters are cost efficient and provide more opportunity to reach a wider range of women

▶ Building on existing women's networks, organizations and cooperatives, conduct a situational assessment and stakeholder mapping to identify and purposively reach out to informal women-led businesses

▶ Mixed communication channels to reach more people with limited access to information i.e. radio, social media, bootcamps, group meetings by cooperatives, organizations

▶ Roll-out engagement with formal and registered businesses, to informal and small-scale businesses in sub-national and districts levels. For example, in Pakistan, SBN initial phase involved about 73 formal large businesses in 15 cities but is currently expanding to other locations and reaching out to SMEs in informal settings

Operational approach to empowering women in business

There is a wide array of actions and approaches needed to empower women given their heterogeneity. Delivering SBN support services should be guided by analysis of the existing challenges, issues on the ground, and the considerations of what support services are practical in the given context and locations.

SBN teams should also use the existing SBN gender checklist to plan, implement and monitor progress of their programs or support services, and capture and generate learnings on empowering women as entrepreneurs, employees and consumers of nutritious products. Finally, the aim should be to integrate lessons learned and implementation experiences into ongoing/new programs and support service delivery in SBN networks.

Examples of entry points for delivering SBN support services:

- Convenings, trainings and events
- Pitch Competition
- Dedicated Financing supports
- Partnerships, advocacy and commitments

Examples of good practices

SBN Bangladesh

- SBN Bangladesh is building an SME platform at the sub-national level through partnership with the National Association of Small and Cottage Industries, Bangladesh (NASCI) and the Chamber of Commerce. The network aimed to have at least 50% women entrepreneurs as members in the sub-national SBN committees.
- The network is also working to develop a women-only community within its network to promote gender equality and address the specific challenges female entrepreneurs face, such as access to finance and safety concerns in transporting their own products.

SBN Tanzania

- Sanavita, a women-led SME collaborating with
- >2,000 smallholder farmers to produce nutritious food products for the community. The outcomes for the farmers include economic empowerment and dietary diversity.
- Countries that have agriculture as the main employment and source of livelihood should leverage agri-food business to empower farmers and agricultural cooperatives. More opportunities to reach youth and women farmers and MSMEs whose significant contribution to nutritious value chain are not usually documented.



Practical guidelines for convenings, trainings and events

Priority Actions

- a. **Deliberate inquiry during onboarding process** to gather information on specific needs, preferences and interests as entrepreneurs or employees. Also to capture information on members' age. Understanding their perspectives and values will enable them to make their choices and decisions towards business growth and nutrition impact. The potential roles of women across food value chain should not be defined by sex but by capacity, capability and interest. SBN team should capture the existing constraints including work-life balance, cultural norms and gender bias hindering women participation in events, meetings, accessing resources and opportunities within the network.
- b. **Convening mixed groups** has its positive outcomes but may not be practical in certain contexts due to cultural and religious dynamics. Having men and women discuss women's empowerment and gender issues could help build confidence among women. Depending on the setting, organizing and convening events for women-only participation may be very effective in creating a safe space and to build trust. SBN should engage with gender experts in designing and planning for events and trainings.
- c. **Adequate representation** of women helps amplify friendly environments to enable women entrepreneurs' participation and engagement in the network. For example, the Kenya SBN secretariat is comprised of 12 women and 8 men. The presence of women boosts self-confidence and creates a conducive environment to discuss on what and how to use available resources. SBN should encourage focal points or women champions to reach out to more women entrepreneur in remote and rural areas.
- d. **Motivational trainings or event** that include a theme or phrase on gender equality tend to inspire women. An event could include a theme on "Maternal and young child nutrition" or a phrase like «women and Youth are invited». Also, the event posters or training materials should emphasize issues of interest to women.
- e. **Mentorship** to help build on the trainings which women entrepreneurs have received, and to ensure ongoing support to boost their self-esteem and capability to achieve their goals. SBN team should engage with female focal points to provide needs-based mentorship services, mentor-mentee matching, individual growth plans. In Sri Lanka SBN, mentorship activities with active engagement of women influencers brings hope and inspiration to their fellow women entrepreneurs in the network. SBN should also identify and try to enlist influencers such as women champions and women church leaders.

- f. **Acceleration and incubation programs** provide opportunities that help women entrepreneurs with business advice, assist them in refining their business idea, training, networking, and possibly financial supports.

Examples of monitoring Indicators

- Number of advocacy events, meeting attendees who are female.
- Number of women-MSMEs in formal and informal setting reached or who joined the network through women empowerment events and trainings.
- Number of women-led businesses that reported income growth and/or business growth.
- Number of women entrepreneurs who reported positive transitioning in business stage and size as a result support services provided by SBN.
- Number of event communication or training materials that showcase women in nutritious food value chain developed.
- Number of women entrepreneurs making verified progress against SMART commitments.

Case study 1: Empowering women entrepreneurs through incubation and acceleration support programs

Her&Now project

GIZ supported project in India (2018-2022) to empower women entrepreneurs and support them to raise funding



Empowerment features

Supports on customized growth plan, mentorship, trainings, gender sensitization to financial institutions, addressing specific gender norms that hinder their businesses success



Drivers

Combined scouting methods, mixed communication channels to expand the reach to women with compelling business case. Gender sensitization to service providers, peer support networks and needs-based supports helped to provide mutual emotional. Learnings to manage their finances and accounting empowered them to take control of their organization finances



Results

90% completed the incubation program in the first cohorts; 91% strengthened their confidence as an entrepreneur while 94% successfully scaled up their businesses

Source: 2021 GIZ women's financial inclusion toolkit.pdf

Practical guidelines for pitch competitions

Priority Actions

- Plan specific trainings for women on how to pitch their businesses to investors, prepare business plans, business development and participating in investor pitching sessions. According to literature, women are more likely to be “pushed” into entrepreneurship due to necessity to meet domestic responsibilities rather than “pulled” due to aspiration. Pitch competition is a good approach to “pulling” women into entrepreneurship by inspiring them to make their own business choices and create compelling business solutions. Women who are “pulled” into businesses tend to have better growth, performance, and profitability than those who were “pushed”.
- Support the implementation of pitch competitions for women-only entrepreneurs. Women are more likely to enter competitions when faced with only female competitors. Men and women tend to have different concept and perspectives on the description of success in business. For men, success may be associated with higher profits while for women, success involves having control over their own destinies, achieving their needs, interests and having a better work-life balance.
- Promote women representation in pitch planning and panel sessions. Invite female champion for inspiration and peer-to-peer learning opportunities. These will help to ensure a safe and friendly environment to boost self-confidence.

Examples of monitoring Indicators

- Number of pitch competitions dedicated for only women entrepreneurs and/or women actors in the nutritious food value chain.
- Number of women entrepreneurs that have grown their businesses through participation in pitch competition.
- Number of best practices adopted and implemented that supported women’s empowerment.

Case study 2: Pitch Competition for SMEs and innovations transforming local food systems - Kenya SBN



A woman-owned small business won the runner-up prize (June 2021): Sharon Ndegwa, the Founder of Nature Bowl offers a range of porridge flour mixes targeting mothers and children. Her participation exposed her to relevant information, linkages and inspiration as testified in statements: “With the cash prize I received from the competition, I will improve the quality of my products. I am also doing an analysis to strengthen my products’ adherence to World Health Organization requirements with Professor Catherine Kunyanga from the University of Nairobi, with whom I was linked during the training”. In addition, she says she will use a portion of the prize to move to her own business premises and production unit.

Source: Pitch Competition targets Kenyan SMEs and innovations transforming local food systems - SUN Business Network

Practical guidelines for financing support

Priority Actions

- Provide information and link to targeted financing instruments and financial products to enable women entrepreneurs to access more funding opportunities to expand their business initiatives. Examples include concessional loans, interest-free micro-loans, guarantee facility, escrow account, savings model. According to evidence-based reports, targeted investments for women-led entrepreneurs enables women's economic empowerment, yield positive outcomes for women SMEs, and gender equality. SBN should map the financial needs of its members to identify the businesses to be targeted.
- Target women who have limited access to information, and no or insufficient collateral in the financial market. Facilitate their access or linkages to financial products, encourage raising the ceiling on micro-credit loans, so women entrepreneurs have greater access to more funding to expand their microenterprises
- Facilitate strategic collaboration with relevant partners and sensitize them on the financial needs of women entrepreneurs. Discuss options on linkages to financial service providers or market access and how to better support women entrepreneurs from hindering social and gender norms. In Pakistan, SBN is collaborating with the Government on its finance facility dedicated for graduates to start new businesses. This model could be adopted in other countries to support women and female youth in scaling up their businesses. SBN should foster partnership with the Women's Financial Inclusion Data (WFID). The WFID has detailed information on the state of

women's financial inclusion and gender data in countries such as Bangladesh, Honduras, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey.

- Explore other support services such as targeted trainings to support women entrepreneurs with financial management to help manage their domestic expenditure, and insulate business funds from household demands. A peer-to-peer lending platform is an option to complement the formal financial system. Advocate and promote collateral-free loans or reduced interest rates with lending institutions for women-led businesses. For example, a woman entrepreneur feels empowered if she confidently presents a compelling business solution and she is trusted and given equal opportunity to access financing beyond grants such as concessional loans.

Examples of monitoring Indicators

- Number of advocacy events, meeting attendees who are female.
- Number of women-MSMEs in formal and informal setting reached or who joined the network through women empowerment events and trainings.
- Number of women-led businesses that reported income growth and/or business growth.
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- Number of women entrepreneurs making verified progress against SMART commitments.



Case study 3: Financing support services

"LactoLife Dairy Limited"

A woman-led enterprise and member of Kenya SBN

Empowerment features

- Pauline, the founder of Lactolife was inspired to add value to milk processing, and she set up a small scale initiative - the Yoghurt-4- School Programme;
- The business received training on business planning and market development strategy to draft a five year business plan focusing on scaling operations;
- COVID-19 impacted her business savings, she had no collateral to access additional financing from formal institutions. Available options for her were to receive supports from governmentsponsored Women Enterprise Fund and other fund sources.

Drivers

- Networking exposed her to information on alternative ways of accessing financing such as loans from women's groups and saving schemes.
 - Motivational support services
 - Fostering good partnership relations

Results

- LactoLife is set to scale operations to other schools across the country;
- LactoLife has start offering service on a contractual basis and has already begun a pilot project with three cooperatives.

Source: Accelerating private sector action for improved nutrition : Paulines Purpose

Practical guidelines for partnerships, advocacy and commitments

Priority Actions

- a. Support the linkage of micro, small and medium women entrepreneurs to large companies who are active members of SBN to help their business performance. Sensitize and train these women to advocate and to reach out widely to other women. In Bangladesh, the National Association of Small and Cottage Industries (NASCI), is one of the strategic partners working collaboratively with SBN to build the capacity of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the food industry.
- b. Map and foster collaboration with relevant partners whose priorities include women's empowerment and gender equality. Work closely with female champions or focal points within the collaborating partner organizations.
- c. Extend partnership to non-food value chain partners. For example, stakeholders' programs on Information, Communication and Technology can support women on social marketing and digitalization of business.
- d. Identify opportunities with partners to advocate and support policy review to integrate gender equality and women empowerment. In Bangladesh, the SBN is collaborating with Food Safety Authority (BFSA) and Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) to facilitate policy-level advocacy including the food safety and nutrition guidelines.
- e. Global SBN team should strengthen collaborations with multinational partners and support championing good practices from women entrepreneurs at national and sub-national levels.
- f. Encourage and influence larger business companies to support enabling environment, and provide opportunities for women to change their situation, and solutions to improve their business process. For example, SBN Mozambique is engaging with the biggest business association in Mozambique — Confederation of Mozambican Economic Associations (CTA) — to advocate for nutrition within the private sector ecosystem in the country. One of the results was the integration of nutrition objectives in CTA organizational policy and the revision of its "Agri-business" name to "Agri-business and nutrition".
- g. Foster strategic partnership to promote nutrition of employees in workplace. The Workforce Nutrition Alliance has case study examples of workforce nutrition programmes to encourage other companies to focus more on the health and wellbeing of their employees. Link: Building the Business Case for Workforce Nutrition – A Timeline – The Consumer Goods Forum

- h. Strategic partners include academia, SUN civil society network, ILO, Scouts (volunteers); other SUN networks. Other strategic partners include SUN donors and SBN global partners and donors such as Cargill and DSM.
- i. Building on the existing partnerships between International Chamber of Commerce and WFP³, the SBN country team should explore strategic collaboration or initiatives with national chamber of commerce to facilitate connections between private sector resources and development needs, and to provide skill based trainings, financial services that will benefit MSMEs and the local businesses.

Examples of monitoring Indicators

- Number of women-led or owned businesses benefiting from supportive services i.e., capacity building, job, financing, market)
- Number of gender-based services provided to women-led and owned businesses
- Number of women in leadership roles in businesses
- Number of women engaged in policy and decision making
- Number of disseminated stories, good practices and achievements that showcased women entrepreneurs' contribution in food systems

³ International Chamber of Commerce and WFP partner to mobilize the private sector in support of Zero Hunger around the globe | World Food Programme

Case study 4: Linkage to partnership

"Feed me"

A woman-led enterprise on low-cost nutritious snacks and member of Bangladesh SBN

Empowerment features

Participation in Bangladesh's NutriStar Innovation Challenge in 2020 exposed the entrepreneur (Zarin) to partners who are supporting the enterprise impact and reach.

Quote from Zarin: "There were times when I wanted to give up but SBN gave me hope that my idea could succeed, and they created a bridge to other organisations that have supported me."

Supporting partners include Welt Hunger Hilfe (NGO), Bangladesh

Institute of Research and Training on Applied Nutrition, Bangladesh Agricultural University

Drivers

- Facilitated platform to create opportunities for engaging with partners
 - Motivational support services
 - Fostering good partnership relations

Results

- Improve access to nutrition information and nutritious food to employees;
- Expansion of its operations and production infrastructure. Feed Me is seeking investment from the government and international investors to maximise efficiency and scale.

Source: Zarin's passion for nutrition - Sun Business Network (lucidleaps.com)

Practical guidelines for school meal programs

Priority Actions

- Deliberate target support to women in the agri-food supply value chain to increase business opportunities for women actors in the national school meal programs and help drive the market towards delivering nutritious meals for all children. Include training sessions on nutrition education and business management to help women improve their business situation and promote nutritious dietary choices.
- Align and collaborate with the ongoing projects and national school meal programs to promote empowerment of women-led businesses. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a group of member states established the School Meals Coalition to leverage the power of national governments and private sector actors to deliver healthy, nutritious meals for children⁴.
- Advocacy and outreach activities to motivate smallholder women i.e., awareness-raising events, meetings with interested women. The WFP implementation of outreach activities as part of its Tunisia's Gender Action Plan aims to generate lessons learned to foster the creation of revenue-generating opportunities for smallholder women in rural areas, and to curb existing discriminatory social norms⁵.

Examples of monitoring Indicators

- Number of women supported to gain income generating job in school meal program
- Number of best practices adopted and implemented that supported women empowerment

⁴ School Meals Coalition - A healthy meal every day for every child

⁵ Capacity Development in the Framework of the School Feeding Programme Standard Project Report 2017 World Food Programme in Tunisia (anonymous) (wfp.org)



Case study 5: Home-grown school feeding

Keo Horn

a mother-of-four and smallholder farmer in Cambodia

Empowerment features

- Keo had the opportunity to participate in WFP's home-grown school feeding programme
- Facilitation of market access and outlets for her locally produced food commodities
- Working together with her husband to deliver food commodities to the school

Drivers

- Having opportunity to participate in the homegrown school feeding programme
- Working together with the husband is an enabler to her economic autonomy, bargaining position and voice in the household decisions.

Results

- A reliable market/outlet for her food commodities
- Keo had stable incomes, greater investment in her farming business
- Contribution to healthy school meals for children

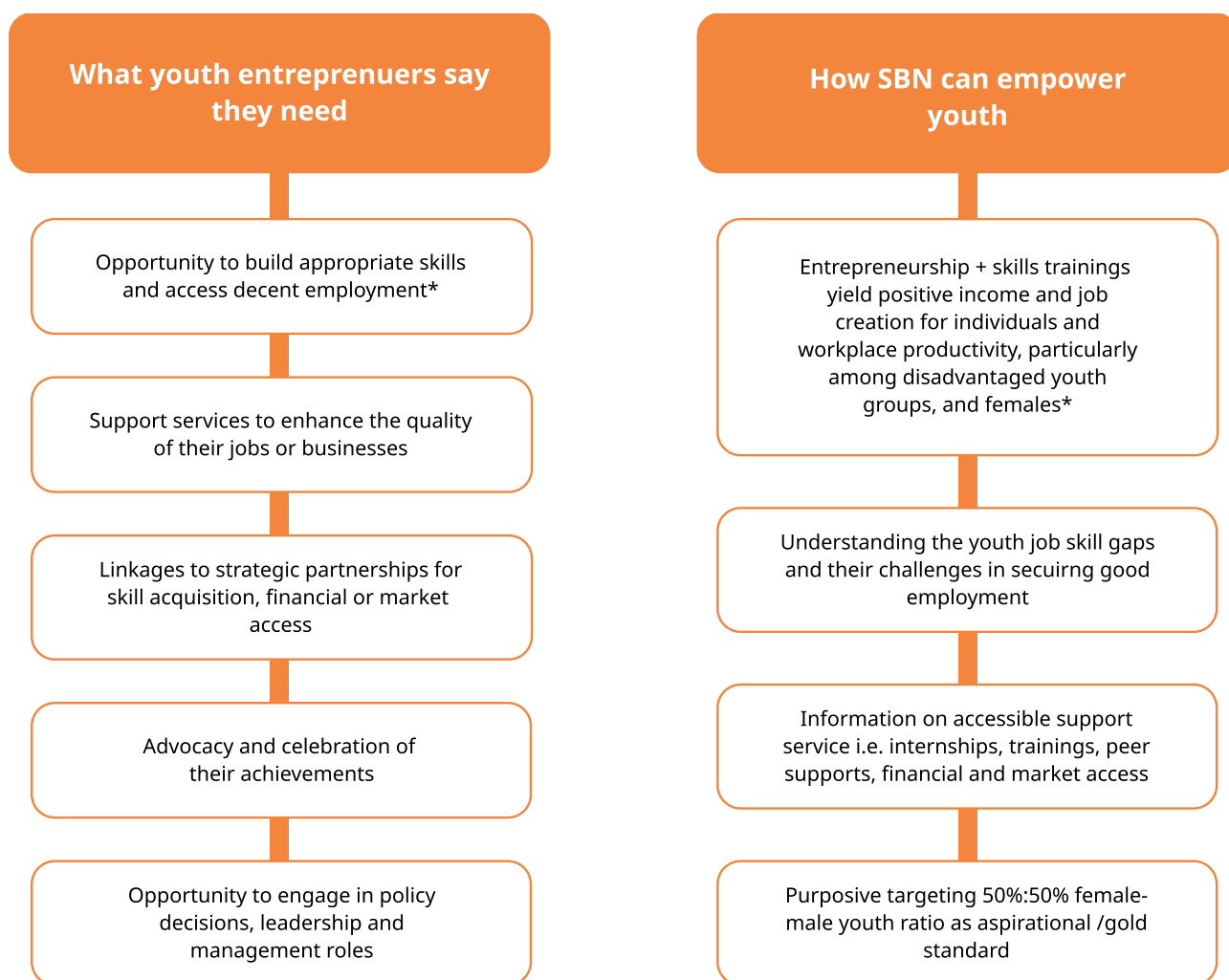
Source: Changing lives: 5 ways WFP is helping to empower women | World Food Programme

3. Youth Empowerment Implementation Guide

Drivers of successful youth empowerment

This section describes the various driving factors and enablers which the SBN teams should explore as youth empowerment features within their networks, existing programs and new program designs to promote better economic and nutrition impact for youth. In addition, SBN teams should explore multiple entry points through strategic partnership with youth beyond entrepreneurship — as employees and consumers of nutritious food products.

There is much less available experience within SUN in general and SBN in particular regarding what works/what doesn't when it comes to effective youth empowerment within business systems compared to what is available for women's empowerment. The following guidance is thus not as detailed or extensive as that developed for women, and this is not due to its lesser importance or potential impact but reflects the paucity of current quality data and research findings.



* Interventions to improve the labour market outcomes of youth: A systematic review of training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services and subsidized employment interventions - Kluve - 2017 - Campbell Systematic Reviews - Wiley Online Library

Priority actions for empowering youth

Literature reviews, some evidence-based studies and insights from key informant interviews have identified some specific action areas that could enable youth to unlock their potential in business and contribute towards improved food systems. The SBN team should focus their support services on the following:

- Digital and behavioral skills (see case study 1 below) are the largest youth skills gaps identified by employers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Limited IT and computer literacy of youth is a major barrier SMEs expressed for not investing in productivity⁶. The ability to use up to date software (for example Microsoft Office products) for carrying out basic productivity enhancements for employers would be a basic starting point. A certification system for youth could also be explored, assigned for passing basic computer literacy training and potentially progressing to what employer-identified IT skill gaps are. Behavioral skills include executive function, analysis, interpersonal and communication skills.
- Relevant work experience is the largest challenge that youth themselves express to securing good employment — so helping them obtain any relevant initial work experience should be a focus of the SBN.

This is to be combined with an advocacy approach to SBN members to highlight the benefits of hiring or supporting youth, tailored to each country.

- Job opportunities in the agri-food value chain. About 50% of youth believe the agriculture industry presents the most opportunities for job creation – which is the same as what they think of the tech industry. This is a good opportunity to attract youth to SBN networks.
- Vocational training is an essential way to allow youth to gain relevant work experience. Many employers strongly support vocational and technical training to address the skills gap. Although at the same time the larger SMEs are biased towards hiring university graduates vs vocational graduates⁷. SBN teams should advocate to SMEs that vocationally trained youths may in fact be a better match for the skills they are seeking. SBN's can also reach out to existing vocational training networks in country to leverage expertise and contacts and invite to become SBN members. Vocational training is provided via private and public sectors in many countries, for different skill levels and age groups.

⁶ Youth-Employer Perspective On The Labour Market Challenges (oliverwyman.com)

⁷ Youth-Employer Perspective On The Labour Market Challenges (oliverwyman.com)



Operational approach for empowering youth in business

1. **Deliberate targeting:** Program design should include an explicit target for youth groups and involve youth focal points in the design process as their voice is often unheard. Young women are targeted in SBN programs but mainly or only via workplace nutrition programs (e.g., Cambodia, Ethiopia and Bangladesh). This should continue but expand to include and target young women within SBN directly.
2. **SBN Membership:** Currently, most national SBN's focus mainly on a) business owners or b) large businesses, however all SBN teams acknowledged the need to expand focus to the "employee base". This implies SBN membership of not just entrepreneurs but employees also. This is especially the case for young women who "just need employment."
3. **Pitch competitions:** All SBN teams mentioned the pitch competition as a good platform for youth engagement. However, there is need to measure the benefit/cost ratio of the pitches and impact on youth, and meaningful follow-up approach with the "winning" teams and expanding the concept to a broader definition of what constitutes "winning" to one which includes sharing and cooperating for business and job success.
4. **Governance:** Another innovation could be to reserve a "youth seat" on national SBN secretariats.
5. **Capacity Building:** Youth are perceived (including by many SBN coordinators) as having "limited capacity" and "risky" or "unsustainable" hires in the private sector. This perception is a barrier to fully including youth within SBN's. SBN work should thus include an element or component in its trainings and engagement to eliminate this bias and in fact advocate for youth by highlighting positive business outcomes of hiring and supporting them.
6. **Partnership:** SBN teams should foster strategic partnership and linkages to service providers to support youth on skill acquisition, job experience, access to finance and markets.
7. **Monitoring and Learning:** Given the limited experiences and literature on this subject, SBN teams should monitor and document implementation experiences on youth empowerment in food systems. The learning agenda would include knowledge generation in providing support services to youth as entrepreneurs, employees and promoters or consumers of nutritious products. These lessons learned and implementation experiences would inform ongoing/new programs and support service delivery in SBN networks and could also be shared with partners in the youth space.



Practical guidelines for empowering youth entrepreneurs and “intrapreneurs”

Priority Actions

- a. Engage and partner with youth empowerment-focused organizations to leverage each other’s networks
For example:
 - The World Bank’s Solutions for Youth Employment (S4YE)
 - Youth Business International
 - Mastercard Foundation
 - National Youth associations in each country
- b. Focus on helping youth develop relevant skills for industry demands = vocational and technical training, with a base of IT/computer training for all.
- c. Do not focus on young entrepreneurs only – the vast majority of youth need employment and will not create businesses. They can however be very “Intrapreneurial” within businesses.
- d. There isn’t universal agreement on what defines a “youth” in terms of age. Most agree that the 20–25-year-old bracket are youth, but several indicate that the age should be pushed to at least 30, while others do not consider 15–18-year-olds as being worthy of “investment” yet. SBN’s understand the need to focus on cohorts younger than 30 years-old and must define what age bracket “youth” fall within in their countries. We suggest staying with the 15-27 or 28 year-old bracket at the least, and potentially expanding up to 30 in some cases.
- e. Develop a plan for connecting with the informal agri-food sector, which employs up to 90% of youth, possibly via pilots that focus on informal SME’s with a successful track record.
- f. Advocate to industry that youth are not “risky” investments if nurtured properly
- g. Focus on the challenges faced by young women, especially in rural areas, which are not being addressed, and in fact they are absent from all SBN policies and engagement, except in the context of

workplace nutrition programs for workers, and (to a limited degree) pitch competitions.

Examples of monitoring Indicators

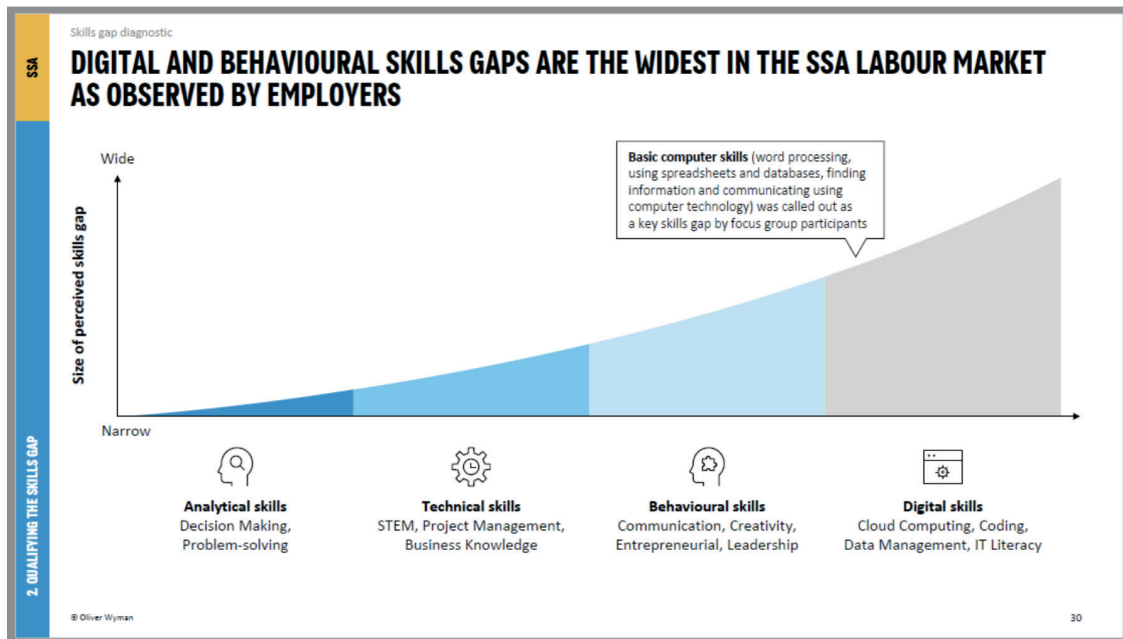
- Number of youth or youth-led businesses linked to partners (disaggregate for support services i.e., capacity building, job, financing, market)
- Number of youths benefitting from new skills, trainings, job experience (disaggregate by gender)
- Number of youths supported to have their voice in decision making
- Number of disseminated stories, good practices and achievements that showcased youth entrepreneurs’ contribution in food systems.

Additional Resource

This following link outlines evidence to what works/ what doesn’t regarding youth and employment globally.

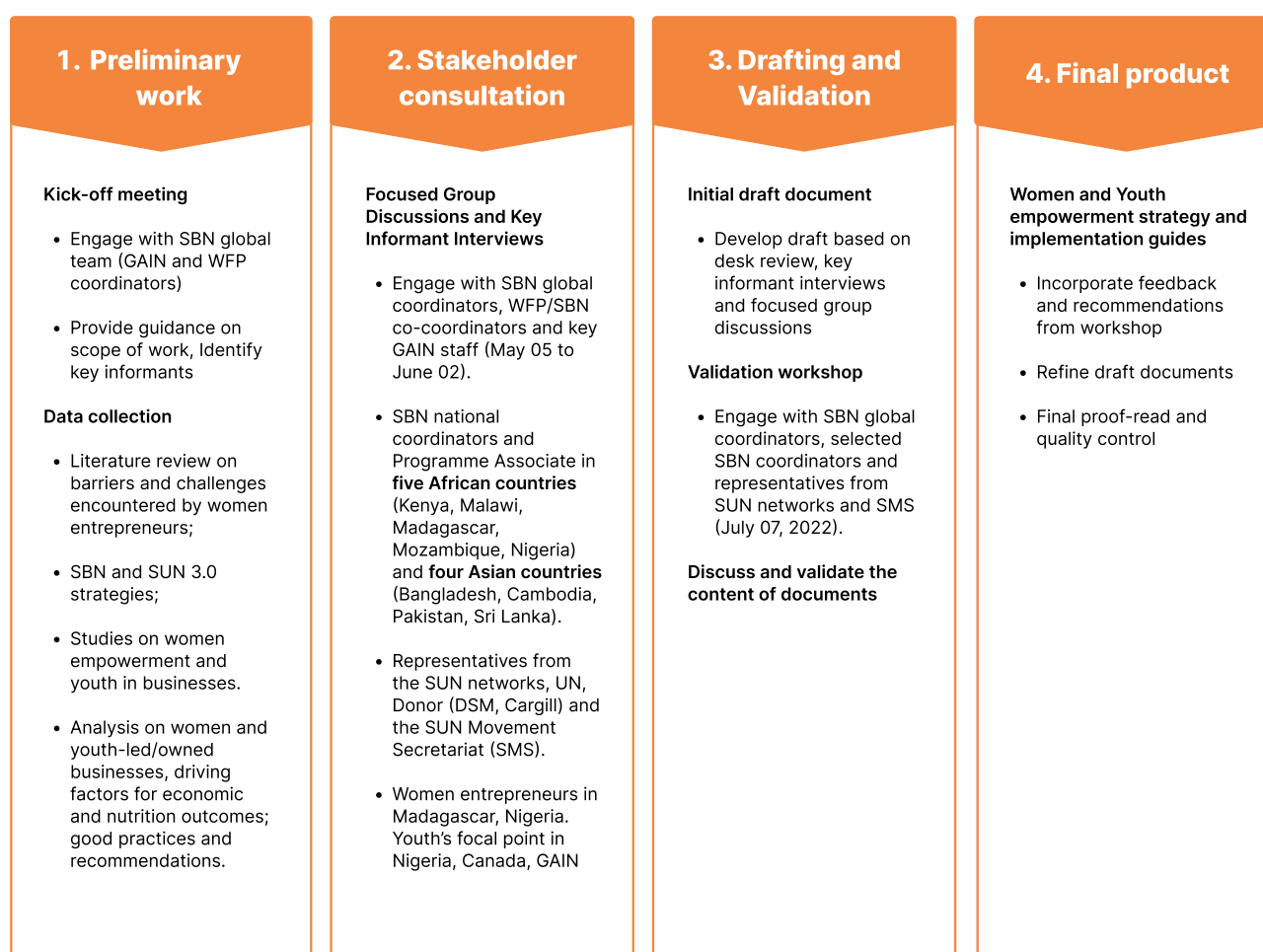
<https://gapmaps.3ieimpact.org/evidence-maps/youth-employment-evidence-gap-map>

Case study 1: Capacity building to address skill gaps



Source: [Interventions to improve the labour market outcomes of youth: A systematic review of training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services and subsidized employment interventions - Kluge - 2017 - Campbell Systematic Reviews - Wiley Online Library](#)

Annex 1: Process for developing the strategy and implementation guides



Annex 2: List of Key Informants

Names	Country	Organization/Role
1. Mohammad Hemayet Hossain	Bangladesh	SBN Coordinator
2. Mahmud Hasan	Bangladesh	Programme Associate
3. Sok Chea Hak	Cambodia	SBN Coordinator
4. Maureen Muketha	Kenya	Programme Associate
5. Thierry Nohasiarivelo	Madagascar	SBN Coordinator
6. Voahangy Ramaromisa	Madagascar	Female Entrepreneur
7. Hasina Ralay	Madagascar	Female Entrepreneur
8. Lilly Musaya	Malawi	SBN Coordinator
9. Linny MSOWOYA	Malawi	SBN Coordinator
10. Catia Manguene	Mozambique	SBN Coordinator
11. Ivy King-Harry	Nigeria	SBN Coordinator
12. Tomisin Odunmbaku	Nigeria	Programme Associate
13. Uduak Igbeka	Nigeria	WFP
14. Babajide Oluwase	Nigeria	Male Entrepreneur
15. Ifeoluwa Olatayo	Nigeria	Female Entrepreneur
16. Toyin	Nigeria	Female Entrepreneur
17. Muhammad Usman Ali	Pakistan	SBN Coordinator
18. Akanksha Hulangamuwa	Sri Lanka	SBN Coordinator
19. Poornima Rodrigo	Sri Lanka	SBN Coordinator
20. William Zach Knechtel	Global	SUN-UN
21. Renee de Jong	Global	SMS -Youth
22. Shea Wickramasingha	Global	SBN SUN Excom Rep
23. Kate Olender	Global	Cargill
24. Albertine van Wolfswinkel	Global	Cargill
25. Florentine Oberman	Global	Royal DSM
26. Sophie Healy-Thow	Global	GAIN-Youth Cordinator
27. Miriam Shindler	Global	GAIN, Youth and Adolescents
28. Noora-Lisa Aberman	Global	GAIN-Gender
29. Christina Nyhus Dhillon	Global	GAIN-Knowledge Leadership
30. Stella Nordhagen	Global	GAIN-Knowledge Leadership
31. Azeez Salawu (Nigeria)	Global	Youth focal point
32. Taylor Quinn (Canada)	Global	Youth focal point
33. Maame Manful	Global	GAIN- Partnership Council
34. Marijke Hummel	Global	Knowledge Leadership

Annex 3: List of participants at validation workshop

Names	Country	Organization/Role
1. Mohammad Hemayet Hossain	Bangladesh	SBN Coordinator
2. Mahmud Hasan	Bangladesh	Programme Associate
3. Maureen Muketha	Kenya	Programme Associate
4. Thierry Nohasiarivelo	Madagascar	SBN Coordinator
5. Lilly Musaya	Malawi	SBN Coordinator
6. Muhammad Usman Ali	Pakistan	SBN Coordinator
7. Seble Feleke	Ethiopia	SBN Coordinator
8. Hana Yemane Wodajo	Ethiopia	SBN Coordinator
9. Hannah ROWLANDS	Global	WFP
10. Manasseh Miruka	Global	GAIN
11. Yetunde Olarewaju	Global	GAIN
12. Miriam Shindler	Global	GAIN
13. Ritta Sabbas Shine	Global	GAIN



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