



Youth entrepreneurship in the WASH sector in Madagascar

CASE STUDY

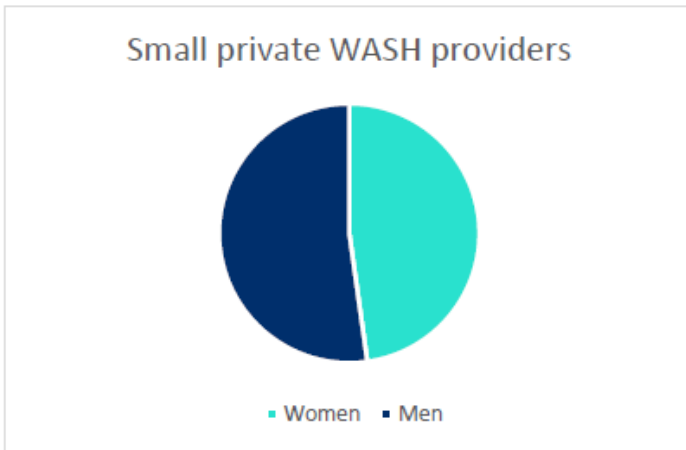


UNDERSTANDING YOUTH PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDERS IN WASH

Mobilizing youth categories among private WASH operators is an important strength of the sector. Youth are potential resources at the local level, have the capacity for innovation and creativity, and can be valuable partners in providing products and services to households and institutions.

Thus, promoting WASH youth entrepreneurship contributes to economic and social development. The national youth strategy defines young people as men and women between 14 and 30 years old¹.

¹ 2016/04/Politique-Nationale-de-la-Jeunesse à Madagascar - Article 2: Under the terms of this law, youth is defined as any person between 14 and 30.



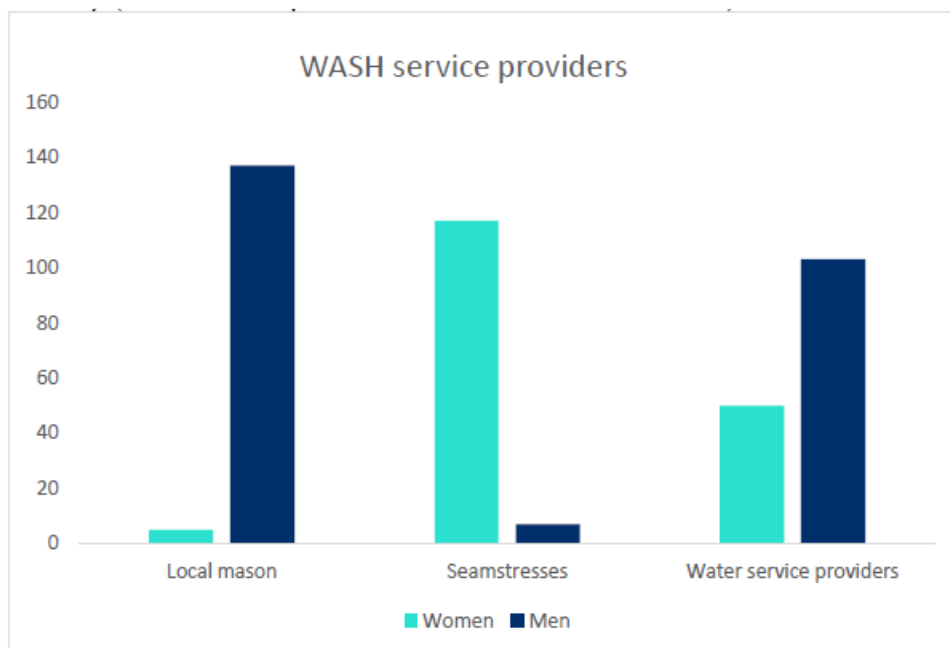
In FY21, the project supported 473 WASH service providers, comprising 47.7% of women (226 persons) and 26% (123) of young people under 30.

RANO WASH promotes the valorization of youth in the WASH service providers' professionalization because youth is a unanimously recognized human capital and a lever of development for the nation.

During the youth week in August 2021, RANO WASH organized a forum for young service providers in WASH in Vakinankaratra.

RANO WASH supports a variety of private WASH entrepreneurs, including water system managers and their staff, local masons who provide sanitation products and services, and local seamstresses who produce and promote basic hygiene kits, including sanitary pads, masks, and kitchen tools such as towels and potholders.

The graph below represents the distribution of WASH services providers, disaggregated by field of activity (water service providers, masons, and seamstresses):



In general, WASH operators already have experience in service provision or production: for example, masons already have house construction experience, and seamstresses know how to sew. But in rural areas, they mainly practice agriculture and livestock as a source of income. In addition, they have an average level of education, i.e., they stopped studying during secondary school.

The graph below represents the distribution of WASH service providers, disaggregated by field of activity (water service providers, masons, and seamstresses) and gender.

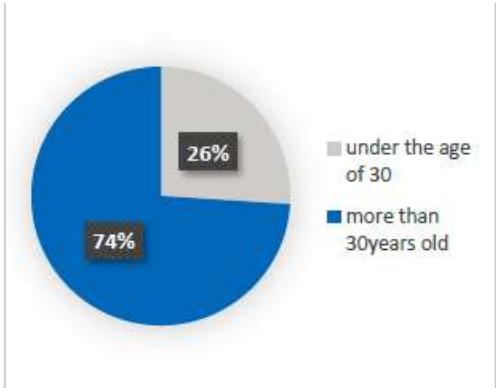


Figure 1. WASH service providers disaggregated by age

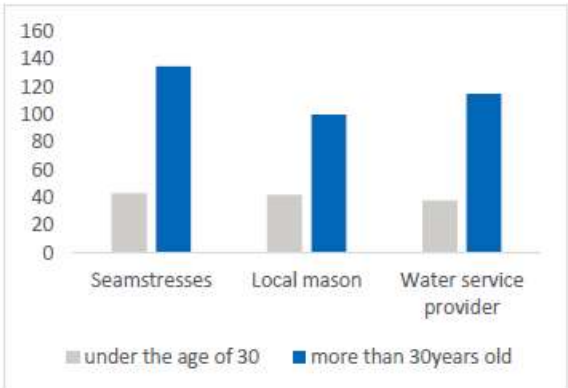


Figure 2. WASH service providers disaggregated by field of activity and by age

All types of WASH activities interest youth relatively equally at the level of masons, seamstresses, and water system managers.

In general, the local young masons and seamstresses work alone. They are the ones who both manage and execute their activities, unlike water system management, where none of the managers are young, but their staff is young people.

However, among the local seamstresses and masons, more than twenty have employees.

They have already provided training to other new entrepreneurs, including a young seamstress from Amboniarivo in Vakinankaratra who heads a team of five.

Adults generally dominate the business in the WASH sector, but young people are starting to take their place.

In addition, the providers and suppliers of water, sanitation, and hygiene products and services comprise various categories of people.

- Mothers and fathers
- Women heads of household
- Women and men with disabilities
- Young farmers and also young students
- Ordinary citizens

RANO WASH PROJECT

RANO WASH aims to provide equitable and sustainable access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services in rural areas of Madagascar to enhance health and nutrition and protect the environment in 6 regions of intervention: Alaotra Mangoro, Atsinanana, Vatovavy Fitovinany, Vakinankaratra, Matsiatra Ambony, and Amoron'i Mania by strengthening governance and monitoring, increasing the engagement of the private sector in the delivery of water, sanitation and hygiene services, and improving sustainable healthy WASH behaviors.

RANO WASH's second objective seeks to ensure that water, sanitation, and hygiene services and products are available and accessible to different community groups, including vulnerable groups. One of the project's approaches is promoting women's economic empowerment, which improves income through economic activities around WASH.

To coincide with Youth Week 2021, in FY21, the project team conducted a forum that mobilized representatives of entrepreneurs from the six regions' project intervention in Vakinankaratra. Part of the forum's objectives was to support the initiatives of young entrepreneurs in the WASH sector.

The forum provided an opportunity to share the achievements of young private operators working in water, sanitation, and hygiene and facilitated a space for each region to exchange and share on the different initiatives.

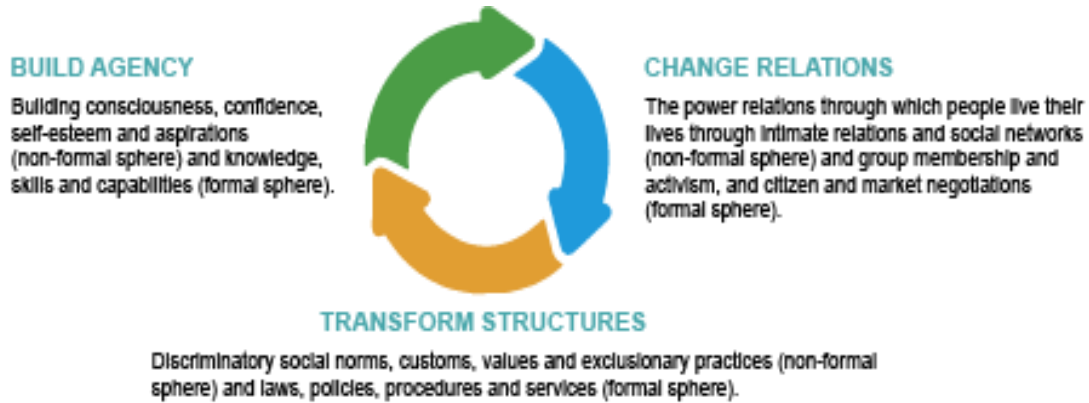
The results of the workshop were to:

- Exhibit different innovative products and services developed by local entrepreneurs by region,
- Strengthen the capacity of entrepreneurs to improve their products and services through sharing and exchange
- Share challenges experienced by young private entrepreneurs and any solutions developed to tackle these

This document will identify the challenges, solutions, and good practices shared during this forum.

RANO WASH SUPPORT STRATEGY

RANO WASH has developed a strategy to support young private operators based on the Gender Equality and Women's Voice (GEVV) framework developed by CARE International. It includes three main areas: strengthening agency, changing relationships, and transforming structures. Although the GEVV focuses on gender, it also allows for analyzing factors affecting young men and women.



Build agency - Self-esteem

Regarding access to training programs, men are much more privileged than women. The often excessive workload of young girls and housewives, especially in rural areas, prevents them from getting information or training. Women and girls work mainly in informal spaces. The specific hygiene needs of women and girls are poorly understood and addressed at the household, community, and institutional levels. Women's mobility is limited, making it difficult to access income-generating activities. Low levels of education, illiteracy, and women's economic dependence on their husbands are major constraints to the dignity and independence of women and girls.

Training sessions provided:

- Technical training on the activity: construction of latrines adapted to the rural context, making of sanitary napkins and masks, water system management
- Training and coaching on entrepreneurship
- Tips to strengthen marketing and sales communication
- Simple financial management tools
- Simplified project management



Figure 1: Rasoamanana Sina works as a local mason in Mahatsara Brickville, in the Atsinanana region has realized her dream of becoming a local technician.

Change relations - Connecting WASH services providers with institutions that can help them promote their products and services

The Malagasy business environment for several sectors is male-dominated and favorable for urban areas. Malagasy customs grant privileges to men in economic production activities. It is normal to meet businessmen rather than women and young people. Women and girls have little access to the means of production (land, livestock, technology). This situation places women in a relationship of dependence, even submission, which prevents them from engaging in viable economic actions and contributing to decision-making. RANO WASH strengthens the involvement of the private sector in the production and provision of water, sanitation, and hygiene products and services, which represents a great new opportunity for job creation for the people concerned. "The economic recovery must be carried out for the private sector and with the private sector since this sector is the main provider of jobs and added value in Madagascar."² One of the strategies is to connect these local operators with different types of public, civil, and private collaborators to i) mobilize sources of financing, ii) access information, training, and exchanges, iii) develop the market to promote their activity. Rural men, women, and young people have demonstrated their interest in becoming professional private operators in their respective areas and expanding their networks to develop their businesses.

RANO WASH supports private operators to create a group or platform or network of operators to facilitate exchanges and conduct advocacy activities together. The project promotes the importance of engaging and supporting the private sector for inclusive and sustainable WASH services. Finally, it links private WASH operators with various institutions such as

- Public institutions involved in WASH services, such as schools, health centers, markets, ...
- Financial institutions (banks, MFIs, institutions financing start-up projects, ...)
- Public and private institutions that promote private sector engagement or youth development or women's empowerment, such as EDBM, GEM, Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Youth First.

Transform structures – social norms and policies

In addition to capacity building and networking for private WASH operators, it is also essential to examine how policies and norms affect gender inequality and reduce the ability of women, marginalized groups, and minorities to reach their full potential. In private entrepreneurship, social norms dictate male dominance, the practice of traditional occupations designed only for men or for women, and the low representation of women and girls in income-generating activities. The Malagasy constitution and laws do not restrict gender equality in terms of participation in economic activities. However, women's participation is limited due to social, cultural, and traditional constraints compared to men's participation. The support to private operators and their business development influence the transformation of harmful norms gradually.

Relevant social norms that have changed:

- Women have access to income-generating activities
- Young people get involved in business
- Men practice jobs presumed by society to be women's jobs
- Women practice jobs that society presumes to be men's jobs
- Women and young people attend training and sharing sessions.

² Andry Ravalomanda, Directeur général de l'EDBM, YEARBOOK RAPPORT ECONOMIQUE, Madagascar 2021, L'EMERGENCE MALAGASY, <https://edbm.mg/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Yearbook-economique-Madagascar-2021.pdf>

RANO WASH supports these operators, especially women, youth, and people with disabilities, to share their successes, challenges, and measures taken to overcome them.



Figure 2: Rakotoarison Juliano Arthur, 18 years old, the son of Soanangaly Sabine Arthure, the local promoter In Fanara, Foulpointe, in the Atsinanana region, very proud of his mother’s achievements becomes a local producer of handwashing devices.

PRODUCTS SUPPLIED BY LOCAL PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURS

The products and services provided by private operators vary from region to region. The service providers have innovated services and products in response to client demands. The project supported them in developing and promoting these models. During the forum, the private operators also discovered new products and services relevant to their localities.

The table below shows the products that private operators are selling, including youth operators, and their interest in expanding products in the six intervention regions.

	Products supplied by masons until August 2021						New products that masons plan to produce					
	ALM ³	AMM ⁴	VAK ⁵	HM ⁶	V7V ⁷	ATSS ⁸	ALM	AMM	VAK	HM	V7V	ATSS
SanPlat slab	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nozzles	0	0	0	0	x	0	x	x	x	x	x	x
SanPlat slab with siphon	x	0	0	0	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Satopan	x	0	0	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
ECOSAN toilet	x	0	0	0	x	0	x	x	x	x	x	x
Beam	x	0	0	x	0	0	x	x	x	x	x	x
Septic tank toilet	x	0	0	0	x	0	x	x	x	x	x	x
Pit latrine	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Biosand filter	x	0	0	x	x	0	x	0	0	x	x	x
Handwashing device	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Shower	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Tippy tap	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Box for VLSA group	0	0	0	x	0	0	0	0	0	x	0	0
	Products supplied by seamstresses until August 2021						Products that seamstresses want to produce					
	ALM	AMM	VAK	HM	V7V	ATSS	ALM	AMM	VAK	HM	V7V	ATSS
Masks	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Postpartum pads	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Sanitary pads for adult	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Sanitary pads for teenagers	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Sanitary pads that do not need panties	0	0	0	0	x	0	0	0	0	0	x	0
Panties	x	0	0	0	0	0	x	0	0	0	0	0
Soap	0	x	0	0	0	0	0	x	0	0	0	0
Diapers	0	x	0	0	0	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Table mat	x	0	0	x	0	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Potholder	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Cover for bucket	x	0	0	0	0	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Handmade gel	0	x	0	0	0	0	0	x	0	0	0	0
Articles of decoration	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

³ Alaotra Mangoro

⁴ Amoron'i Mania

⁵ Vakinankaratra

⁶ Haute Matsiatra

⁷ Vatovavy Fitovinany

⁸ Atsinanana

This table provides information on the diversity of products and services produced and marketed by local private operators to facilitate access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services in rural areas to improve healthy behavior change.

The products and services provided are conditioned by the geo-climatic specificities of the environment, the production capacity and creativity of the operators, and above all, the demands of the clients. About masons, pit latrines and SanPlat slabs are common products. A coastal zone like Vatovavy Fitovinany and Atsinanana demands a higher quality of latrines because of the geo-climatic characteristic of the environment and the customers' needs. The study with iDE confirmed to start of latrine product promotion with the early adopters of the coast to spread the practice to the early majority in this area. After seeing the innovative products, private operators in the highlands have also decided to try the products. The project will support them in their commitment.

The different types of sanitary napkins are like standard products for all seamstresses. They have adapted the model given during the training according to the needs of their clients. Baby diapers have attracted the attention of those who do not yet produce them. While only two regions produced baby diapers, all private operators in the six regions will produce them in the coming period. Tools such as table mats and potholders are attractive products.

YOUTH PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDERS' GOOD PRACTICES

Youth private operators bring creativity and innovation to improve the quality of products, services, and sales to facilitate access to products and services for all and to make the business profitable, inclusive, and sustainable:

Products that meet the needs of different target segments:

Most youth operators are already practicing their field of activity as masons, seamstresses, and resellers or managers of water points. They design their products following the models shared at the beginning of the training. They use existing and more affordable local materials and more sophisticated equipment. Additionally, the project supports WASH service providers to promote WASH products that consider the specific needs of households' socio-cultural and economic categories, men, boys, girls, and persons with disabilities, based on their aspirations. Therefore, there is a variety of products.

Some examples of WASH products supported by RANO WASH to take into account the different categories of targets:

Three types of water connections are available to allow all categories of households, especially the most vulnerable, to have access to services: private connections for those who can afford to pay for individual connections, social connections to allow groups of households, especially female-headed households or older people who live alone. For this purpose, 5 to 10 households can group to pay for a social connection. And lastly, the collective water points are intended for vulnerable households who prefer to buy water daily. The project has also observed that the resale of water by subscribers to individual and social connections is very common, depending on the affinity between neighboring households.

Latrines adapted to different targets are designed, such as latrines with seats and supports for the elderly, pregnant women, and people with disabilities at the community and institutional levels.

And sanitary pads are adapted according to the demands of women and girls. That is why some different sizes and pads that do not require panties.

COVID-19 has further strengthened the use of handwashing devices with soap. Private operators learned different handwashing designs: using bamboo, yellow jerry cans with handmade taps, water bottles with a rocker tap, and more advanced technologies to make pedal handwashing devices.

Services adapted to the cultural and socio-economic context:

Apart from the production of products, private operators develop and implement strategies that value adapted and proximity services. They do both product information and user awareness. As they are in the locality, the services developed are based on what they discuss with the potential users by privileging their aspirations. They work with social structures such as natural leaders, local promoters, school officials, public market officials, and head doctors of basic health centers to promote their services and products.

They have created payment terms and after-sales services, especially latrine and shower construction services, to attract more clients to contract.

The definition of the selling price is based on the expenses incurred with a profit margin of 20 to 40%.

Use of different channels for product and services promotion:

The youth operators have identified different occasions to organize campaigns to promote their products: the harvest period or "*hasotry*" or "*miaka-bokatra*," different celebrations at the local level, and common festivities such as Independence Day, world days related to water, sanitation, and hygiene, and the international women's day.

Retail and wholesale are possible. Operators work with various local institutions to promote their products. Natural leaders, local promoters, public schools, doctors, and other small boutiques earn a margin by selling the products and services.

Some operators are also beginning to sell their products online and are targeting larger areas. They are also working with local radio to advertise their products and services.

TESTIMONIES OF YOUNG WASH OPERATORS AND SOME USERS



Razafindrabezandriny Lantonirina Robert: local seamstress of the Ambatomena Commune, District of Antsirabe II, Vakinankaratra Region

"As a man, I was ashamed to work on women's hygienic materials. I defied my shame when I felt that my wife was supporting me. My family benefits from sanitary sewing napkins: my wife and daughter use the products I have made.

My wife's friends, especially those VSLA members, also use the products and even become retailers of my products. The orders are increasing every day.

My daughter's friends who are in college are interested in the products. Since then, I realize that the frank collaboration of men and women can become good agents of change together."



TAHINJANAHARY Tolotriniaina Benjamin, 21 years old, is a young student and seamstress in the Ambalamahasoa Commune, Haute Matsiatra region.

"I am in my final year in high school. I am passionate about sewing and practice sewing after learning on the job.

I sew sanitary pads and sell them in the village market. I am not ashamed to practice this activity. It brings me money contributing to my studies and my family's needs. It also helps rural women access adequate sanitary pads, which are very useful materials.

So far, I plan to continue my studies and go further, but sewing presents an opportunity for me to get into the market business faster and develop a relationship. »



RANOVA HARISOLO Olva Margueritte, 28 years old, young team leader supply in the water system construction, Mickael enterprise in the Commune Androy, Haute Matsiatra region.

*" I am the only woman working on the construction site of the dam, reservoir, and water supply's piping in the commune of Androy. I manage 25 men in the team for 90 days. The company's head entrusts me with the management of materials and team members in the construction site. I use management tools, and I communicate with the team members. Sometimes, the workers, who are all men from the construction site, behave badly with me, but I use the rules set up by the company in terms of asset and human resource management. **As I am single, working on a construction site is a great adventure, and I am proud.** »*



RAKOTONINDRINA Volafarivo, with reduced mobility in her lower limbs, a seamstress in the commune of Ambositra II, Amoron'i Mania region

" I have experienced the difficulties of people with reduced mobility to satisfy their need for hygiene since my childhood, and after the training provided by RANO WASH on making sanitary napkins, I decided to direct my activities in the manufacture of diapers for babies and the elderly and sick. Now I deliver my products to the specialized center for people with disabilities.

After a year and a half of my career, I am recognized and solicited by the centers and private operators of Ambositra and outside the region to deliver diapers. This activity has given me a safe income-generating activity, allowing me to move everywhere, forgetting that I am disabled, and the elderly, sick clients can access the hygiene material."

Sanitary pads that do not need panties

In the Kelilalina commune, Vatovavy Fitovinany region, Mrs. Rasoaharilanto Adélaïde, named Lanto, a trained seamstress, created a sanitary pad that does not require panty.



Figure 3: Mrs Lanto with the new model of sanitary pad

In this area, in the fokontany chief lieu, half of the girls in high schools and young women in the village wear pantie every day, compared to two out of ten in remote areas. Women don't use underwear because pantie makes them uncomfortable. It makes them hot, sometimes smells bad, and disturbs their hard work. When they often pee in the open air, they get naked in public. As usual, the girls and women on this site never wear trousers but must wear "sikina" or "lambahoany" literally a sort of loincloth to put around her waist. During menstruation, they make handmade clothes with strings that women can tie according to their size.

Mrs. Lanto produced and sold washable sanitary napkins for women who use panties after training with RANO WASH. After a year of sales, she found that girls and women were unsatisfied with these products because they looked for a pad that did not require panties. Thus was born the idea of designing new sanitary napkins that do not require wearing underwear. In addition to the pad with a removable part that can be changed when it is full, she added a string to both ends to be tied corresponding to the waist like a belt. This model has pleased girls and women. Different sizes are developed: mini for teenagers, medium for women, and large for women who have just given birth.

At the beginning of the production, Mrs. Lanto sold at 2000 ariary per piece to attract customers. The selling price is 3000 ariary per unit, on which a profit margin of 1000 ariary is applied. She sells her products at home every day and once a week on the market day. She also brings them to health centers during vaccination days to target breastfeeding mothers.

Ms. Lanto's vision is to see girls and women in the region fit and comfortable during menstruation by obtaining sanitary napkins that meet their needs: girls can continue their studies without embarrassment, and women feel comfortable.



Figure 4: New model of sanitary pads

"I have two sanitary pads that I use during menstruation. It is very safe. They fix well because I knot according to my size. I am confident even during the gymnastics class," says Alida, a 17-year-old school student, Mrs Lanto's client.

LESSONS LEARNED

As a result of this learning, the WASH Youth Entrepreneurship Forum revealed the challenges, the journey, and the good practices of these young people, of which they feel proud. It presents a space of exchange for entrepreneurs that deserves to be supported in different forms: one by one, by sector group, at the level of neighboring localities or groups in the same region.

- **Youth commitment in private business in water sanitation and hygiene** contributes to facilitating access to water, sanitation, and hygiene products and services for all.
- **The importance of these young people, representing one in four entrepreneurs, must be taken into account in the development of the private sector** given their commendable contribution to the activities of production of products and services of proximity, innovation, and bring a lot of effort to the consideration of the needs of people at all ages and all categories.
- **Young entrepreneurs sometimes remain as handymen or executors.** They manage to provide basic sanitation and hygiene services and products, but their potential can be harnessed to help them become business leaders specializing in WASH.
- **Although adults dominate the WASH business, rural youth are beginning to take their place.** Good initiatives have been developed and shared among them, which stakeholders with the RANO WASH Project can develop a suitable program to strengthen them:
- **Professionalization must be supported more actively** so young entrepreneurs can improve their services. Customers are satisfied, which contributes to the change in user behavior and even achieves social and economic changes in the society where young people operate.
- **Youth are more sensitive to differences among users**, which helps them develop the most appropriate services and products, facilitating access to WASH products for all and contributing to reducing the gaps between males, females, and marginalized and vulnerable groups in WASH product accessibility.
- **Youth operators deliver services and make payment plans in non-discriminatory ways.** WASH service providers cater to the needs of non-majority and marginalized people. Women and men attending the technical training have a short introduction on gender equality and why any gender can do any job.
- **The constraints faced by youth and young women, particularly in accessing finance, need to be better understood and addressed.**

LOOKING FORWARD

Sharing and deepening activities on the business WASH topic will be planned:

- The action plans developed by the service providers at the end of the sharing forum will be followed up and accompanied as needed
- The results of this workshop will then be shared at the community level, particularly with service providers supported by RANO WASH
- RANO WASH supports the initiatives by encouraging women, men, and youth services providers to become more professional by strengthening their capacity and skills in market negotiation, and project management and facilitating their connection with specialized technical and financial support institutions
- This learning presents a prerequisite for a study that RANO WASH plans to conduct on economic and youth women empowerment in the next quarter
- In the long term, all the achievements and the process itself will be conducted at the national level to promote the initiatives of local water, sanitation, and hygiene operators to ensure universal access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services, taking into account the specificities, diversities of the users and conditions for feasibility and sustainability.

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