



Enhanced Opportunities

HELP YOUTH ACHIEVE THEIR DREAMS



Sylvie, 19 year-old from Hauts-Bassins region is an example of how girls in the rural areas of Burkina Faso are able to turn their lives into success, when they get the opportunity.

In Burkina Faso, only two out of five school-aged-children have access to primary education. This is accentuated in rural areas where only 6.5 % of females and 7.6 % of males aged 15-19 year have completed primary education. While in some regions like Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades and Hauts-Bassins, the percentage of youth who have never been to school ranges between 63-75 %. This explains the prominent extreme low literacy and represents a challenge to youth development efforts.

Sylvie dropped out of school at the age of 15, as failing an exam is a one-chance error for girls in her region. Being the eldest daughter in a family living from agriculture- since 86% of the work force in the country is engaged in agricultural activities, her daily routine evolved around helping her father in farming and her mother in the house chores, in addition to her attempt to learn hairdressing.

In December 2013, when Youth in Action was launched in Burkina Faso, Sylvie decided to join the program with the support of her father. *"When I joined Youth in Action, I was looking for having an achievement in my life. I also wanted to learn from the literacy and numeracy sessions provided by the program"*, Sylvie said

Save the Children, in partnership with The MasterCard Foundation, is implementing the six-year program in five countries in Africa. In Burkina Faso, The program's goal is to 4,500 rural young people, both girls and boys, aged 15-17, with foundational literacy and numeracy, livelihood and developmental assets to improve their socio-economic status in the Cascades, Boucle du Mouhoun and Hauts-Bassins administrative regions. The program is implemented through two national partners – Research and Support Group for the Self-Promotion of Populations in Africa (GRAAP) and the Foundation for Community Development (FDC).

Save the Children's Youth in Action Program Manager, Sou Sié Sylvain said: "The extreme low level



of literacy, lack of access to land and capital make self-employment challenging. However, with support and training, entrepreneurial youth can create their own enterprises relevant to their environment by raising in-demand farm animals and growing sustainable crops”.

Sylvie has recently graduated from the program where she has gone through five months of learning basic life skills and market-relevant knowledge including literacy, numeracy, financial and business skills and techniques which helped her to better understand the socio-cultural and economic potential of her environment and to be able to do personal and household budgeting. This was followed by her choice of establishing her own business, one of the pathways offered by the action phase of the program, designed to be relevant to the participants’ personal goals, family situation, community they live in, and the market around them. *“I have chosen to raise local poultry because it is an activity that I like and that pays a lot of money, it will enable me to tie my future projects. This is now my own business that I would have not been able to establish without the support of Save the Children as well as my family. I have received 55,000 CFA (approx. \$ 95 USD) from Youth in Action program to purchase equipment, build the barn and have training on how manage my business”.*

Today, Sylvie is not only able to speak in public, to read, write, calculate and save, but also she is able to think of what she wants to do in her future life and plan for it.

“This is not the end of my dream. I would like to expand my business to open my own hairdresser salon and from the profit of these two businesses, I hope I will be able to invest in the real estate as along term plan”. Sylvie added.

ABOUT YOUTH IN ACTION IN BURKINA FASO

Launched in 2012, Youth in Action's aim is to reach 4,500 young people aged 15-17 in the rural communities of Mouhoun, Cascades, and Hauts Basins, in the western region of the country.

Save the Children works with two national partner: the Research and Support Group for the Self-Promotion of Populations in Africa and the Foundation for Community Development.

Save the Children's Youth in Action program is a Save the Children and The MasterCard Foundation partnership and aims to improve the socio-economic status of around 40.000 rural out-of-school young people, both girls and boys, in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda.