



Country
Burkina-Faso



Implemented by



Budget
350.000 €

Duration
06/2020 - 05/2023

Contributions to SDGs



Implemented by



Financed by



Learning from the
RESOLAB Project: Socio-economic reintegration of vulnerable children and young people by providing digital access and incubation facilities to support education and access to employment.

Can digital social innovation contribute to reducing the digital divide for vulnerable groups (young people, women, the unemployed, refugees and migrants) by improving digital literacy and skills through D4D initiatives in education and training and on the job market?

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Reason

In Burkina Faso's **Ganzourgou province**, during the 2021-2022 school year, the primary cycle education system saw 4,837 pupils (including 1,754 girls) between the ages of 6 and 16 **drop out of school** to work on a day-to-day basis on **gold-panning sites**. This is equivalent to an estimated average drop-out rate of 5.68% (4.16% for girls and 7.16% for boys).

On the gold-panning sites, the boys and some of the girls do digging work, haul up the ore and proceed to crush and grind it; hard and highly dangerous work. In addition, girls work on the gold-panning sites managing the processing sheds or selling drinks and food.

Children and young people working on gold-panning sites are **exposed to many risks**, such as exploitation, drug use, prostitution, illnesses caused by the use of chemical products, work-related accidents causing temporary or permanent disability, and even death due to the lack of mine safety.

Gold-panning and agriculture represent the two main employment opportunities in Ganzourgou province. Unfortunately, few people are trained in small- and medium-scale sustainable farming techniques and many families are forced to send their children to the gold-panning sites for **lack of other income**. This dangerous work remains attractive as some young people who have worked on the gold-panning sites for several years manage to meet their needs (food, clothing, purchase of a motorbike or bicycle, wedding trousseau, etc.).

Terre des Hommes, as part of its child protection mission, focuses on children and young people in vulnerable situations, in particular young people who have dropped out of school or are not attending school, at-risk young people in mobility situations or migrant youths, young street vendors and children in second-chance schools.

Providing (self-)employment opportunities and appropriate training is a major challenge to prevent young people (whether in or out of school) from joining the gold mining industry and to help them build a secure future.

Raising awareness and empowering communities and parents will also help to create sustainable employment alternatives for children and young people.

Digital social innovation

The RESOLAB project has brought together **several partners to achieve a common goal**: Young people and children in vulnerable situations in Ganzourgou province are able to seize opportunities for education, training and professional integration.

The partners were Terre des Hommes and WAKATLAB (i.e. the project consortium), the Child Protection Network, communal social services, schools & teachers and the Provincial Directorates for Youth (DPJ), for Women, National Solidarity, the Family and Humanitarian Action (DPSNFAH), and for Primary and Non-Formal Pre-school Education (DPEPPNF).

The **creation of a digital space** - FabLab within the Mogtédou social action buildings was at the heart of RESOLAB. The project operated in 'funnel' stages, following the professional integration pathway of young people in vulnerable situations.

1. Mobilisation, welcome and information

With the support of the Child Protection Network and the communal social services, who are familiar with the FabLab's catchment area, the project **raised awareness among vulnerable children and young people**.

Young people who come to the FabLab are welcomed and registered for an introductory session in digital technology.

2. Initiation and orientation

1,246 young people, including 733 girls, took part in an **introduction to digital technology** at the FabLab. They discovered its equipment and the many prototypes it produces.

At the end of this induction, young people are **given advice and guidance** on the type of learning they want to engage in in the FabLab. Younger children (under 12) can continue to use the FabLab for play purposes.

The project also set up a **FabMobile**, which uses more limited equipment, to raise awareness and initiate young people in remote areas. The FabMobile also raised awareness among pupils at the region's second-chance schools, encouraging them to continue their digital training.

3. FabLab curriculum

Apart from the latter, all the beneficiaries have to go through stage 4, which is the FabLab digital curriculum training.

Young people follow a **basic training programme** in the FabLab. They discover and/or learn more about various, mainly digital but not exclusively, techniques and tools: IT, embroidery, electronics, 3D modelling and printing, prototyping, soilless cultivation, solar oven, etc.

As part of this programme, young people who have dropped out of school or who are not attending school are also supported, by facilitators and teachers, in an **e-learning curriculum** linked to the official school curriculum.

The e-learning modules were developed on the basis of a needs survey, with the help of the Provincial Directorate for Primary and Non-Formal Pre-school Education, and are accessible to everyone. The modules are used in the FabLab as well as in the second-chance schools in Mopto, Boudry and Zorgho.

4. Professional integration

After the FabLab curriculum, there are two options for young people who want to continue their learning path:

▶ Continue the FabLab training programme.

▶ Professionalise for employment or entrepreneurial purposes.

With the support of the Provincial Directorates for Youth (DPJ) and for Women, National Solidarity, the Family and Humanitarian Action (DPSNFAH), the project consortium selects young people for **vocational training with a head craftsman** (e.g. electricity, sewing, etc.). The DPJ and the communal social services follow up the young people during their further curriculum. The young people also return to the FabLab for **entrepreneurial support**. 60 young people had access to vocational training and follow-up.

Young people and their parents are asked to think about setting up a small business and support is provided to ensure that the **activity is a lasting success**. The consortium and the DPJ organised regular **training courses in business management**.



5. Digital specialisation

Finally, 15 young people with the desire and ambition to develop digital solutions were **supported in the creation of their prototype(s)**.

Throughout the integration process, the FabLab facilitators (WAKATLAB and communal social services) set up **psychosocial activities for the young people** in the FabLab, including raising awareness of the risks associated with working in the mines.



234 young people from remote areas (**177** girls and **57** boys) took part in modelling and design workshops thanks to the FabMobile.

58 young people who completed their vocational training found a job or were installed in their training area (sewing, welding, electricity, dyeing, weaving, mechanics, etc.)

467 children and young people (**279** girls and **188** boys) completed the basic literacy and digital literacy course via the e-learning platform.



“ The introduction to digital tools that I received makes me want to continue training allowing me to become a secretary in a public secretariat. But my dearest wish would be to set up my own public secretariat and train other children.

”
Diane Korsaga, aged 18, living in Mogtéo

**For more stories, just visit
our [website](#)**

KEY MESSAGES

The added value of the RESOLAB project lies firstly at the institutional level:

- At the crossroads of two **areas of expertise**: child protection by Terre des Hommes and digital skills training by WAKATLAB. The two organisations had to consolidate and even build their knowledge and methodological tools around each other's expertise. Their collaboration strengthened and opened up new opportunities for both organisations.
- Local partners **worked together to achieve a common goal**: The social services, second-chance schools, the project consortium and departmental directorates together selected and followed up the 60 young people placed in vocational training. This ensures an integrated, matching and personalised approach to the integration and protection of young people.

The **FabLab and its introductory sessions to computing and digital tools** have served as an **entry point for the integration of young people in vulnerable situations**. Whether or not they went on to a FabLab training course, they discovered tools such as 3D printers for the first time, which aroused their curiosity and encouraged them to return.

The various training courses, although they did not all lead to direct employment, enabled the young people to **rediscover the pleasure of learning and to be curious, to consider other routes to employment, to belong to a group and to regain confidence in their abilities**. 58 young people have set up their own small businesses or become apprentices in a workshop, while others – who had dropped out of school – have gone back to school, and many have started small projects (occasional office work, family vegetable garden).

The participation of vulnerable young people in introductory sessions (in second-chance schools and the FabLab) has enabled the 6 social workers involved in the project to **identify and take charge of at-risk young people**, without waiting for them or a member of their entourage to come and find them.

The RESOLAB project has **raised the profile and status of the work of social workers** in Ganzourgou province. The social services were viewed negatively because they were strongly linked to addressing child protection issues. Thanks to the project, these services have been able to resume their role as psychosocial facilitators in the communities. Parents and young people are more involved in their activities and spontaneously seek out opportunities.

LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Inclusion and equity

- ▶ To reach as many young people as possible and to identify the most vulnerable, the RESOLAB project used **various communication channels**: radio campaigns, town criers, social networks and the **involvement of community** contact persons to mobilise and orient young people, especially on and around gold-panning sites.
- ▶ The joint follow-up (consortium/communal social services) of young people who were placed with head craftspersons has provided youths with educational and entrepreneurial support, while **ensuring their protection**.
- ▶ Through the **FabMobile initiative**, RESOLAB has run digital literacy sessions in localities far from the FabLab, around Boudry, Mogtédou and Zorgho.
- ▶ 4 teachers and 4 supervisors have been initiated in digital tools and specifically trained to use the e-learning platform

Users and stakeholders responsiveness

- ▶ The RESOLAB project introduced a more **individualised approach to training**, particularly at the level of the Provincial Directorate for Youth and schools: The young person is at the centre of the curriculum and the choice of direction is based on his or her specific talents and interests. In addition, the training curriculum not only allow them to specialise but also to continue exploring different techniques and tools. This contributed to a 96% retention rate.
- ▶ The **high retention rate** can also be explained by awareness-raising within the young people's circle. The RESOLAB project fostered communication with parents and families and involved them in the training journey of young people. In addition, the consortium organised several **open days** to reduce the stigma attached to "the digital" and demonstrate its added value in supporting entrepreneurial initiatives. These days were aimed at young people themselves as well as their families and communities.
- ▶ Outings were organised for young people following the initial FabLab training course. They were able to discover other spaces of creation and innovation, particularly in Ouagadougou. These outings not only helped to **motivate the young people on their learning paths**, but also reinforced their curiosity and confidence.



Use of digital tools beyond project's end

The Mogtéo communal social services and the Provincial Directorate for Youth, which have worked closely with the consortium from the start of the project, will continue to **follow up the young people in training**.

The **FabLab** space and equipment will **remain open within the Mogtéo communal social services**. The young people who took part in the project and are already working have become **ambassadors** for social innovation in their region. They are raising awareness among their peers of the opportunities offered by digital technology and the spirit of entrepreneurship, and in the future, with the support of the consortium, they will be able to use the FabLab to train other young people.

The **Moodle e-learning platform** will be made available to teachers so that they can continue to use this tool to enhance the learning of children in and out of school in Ganzourgou province.

Terre des Hommes, with technical support from WAKATLAB, received new funding from April 2023 for two years. This project to prevent and combat child and youth labour in the artisanal mines of Ganzourgou province is also based on the FabLab's activities and will make that a facilitator remains on site.

PERSPECTIVES

Terre des Hommes will continue to develop its **Resilient Innovative Facilities (RIF)** approach, which, as in the RESOLAB project, combines child protection with innovation and ICT.

Terre des Hommes and WAKATLAB have started developing a **financial model** for making FabLabs sustainable (for example, with self-financing via the agricultural sector or the sale of prototypes).

Terre des Hommes will **lobby the Or Zone mining** company to include RESOLAB in their Social and Environmental Responsibility programme in Mogtéo.

This learning sheet has been developed in the framework of the Wehubit Knowledge Exchange Network in collaboration with Julienne Kiswendsida Wanre Ouedraogo (TDH) Gildas Guiella and Alain Guiella (Wakatlab) with the support of Canopée Studio July 2023

