



mastercard
foundation



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

WAEMU ZONE

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2024

SOMMAIRE

p.3

Editor's Note
from Serge

[ACCÉDER À L'ARTICLE](#)

p.4

News

[ACCÉDER À L'ARTICLE](#)

p.5

3 questions to...

[ACCÉDER À L'ARTICLE](#)

p.7

The Foundation's Impact

[ACCÉDER À L'ARTICLE](#)

p.9

Impact Story

[ACCÉDER À L'ARTICLE](#)

p.10

Partner spotlight

[ACCÉDER À L'ARTICLE](#)

p.12

Digital Spotlight

[ACCÉDER À L'ARTICLE](#)

p.13

The Foundation Worldwide

[ACCÉDER À L'ARTICLE](#)

p.14

Behind the scenes

[ACCÉDER À L'ARTICLE](#)



Message from the Director



Serge-Auguste Kouakou,
WAEMU Country Director Mastercard Foundation

Dear friends and partners of the Foundation,

I'm pleased to present this new edition of our quarterly newsletter, the first of the new year, which showcases our impact, innovative projects and remarkable progress in supporting young people and encouraging economic inclusion within the WAEMU region. The Foundation's WAEMU office has established itself as a key driver in the creation of economic opportunities for young people. The initiatives we undertake demonstrate the Foundation's commitment to making a tangible difference to the lives of young people. In 2024 alone, the number of jobs created is around 100,000, 50% of which are filled by young women, and the number of people reached is close to 400,000. To date, the cumulative impact of our actions amounts to 252,000 jobs created, 48% of them for young women, and 7.3 million people reached, 49% of them women. The resounding success of our programs pushes us to go even further, amplifying the positive impact they generate. One of our flagship programs is coming to an end this year, and I am incredibly proud to witness our impact on the ground.

Driven by this momentum, the Mastercard Foundation is embarking on an ambitious approach for 2025, with the launch of a dozen new programs. These initiatives reflect our desire to create dignified and rewarding employment opportunities for young people in the WAEMU region. These programs also aim to strengthen the skills of these young people around the Foundation's five strategic pillars: entrepreneurship development, agricultural value chains, digital transformation and innovation, education and skills development, and policies and systems.

I encourage you to keep reading this third newsletter, which includes a new section called Digital Spotlight. It reflects the Foundation's commitment to raising awareness among its teams, as well as its partners, about innovation and digital transformation to increase the impact of the programs we lead.

Finally, after having all gathered to close the year at the Partners Convening held from December 5 to 6, I would like to express my gratitude to all the Foundation's partners for the remarkable work accomplished this year. Your commitment and collective efforts have enabled many young people in the WAEMU region to become, day by day, a little more masters of their own destiny.

As we embark on this new year, I encourage each and every one of you to continue to create synergies, collaborate closely and connect with each other, notably via the **Partner Connect** platform. Together, by working better and more efficiently as a network, we can amplify our impact.

Once again, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and wish you all an excellent year 2025, marked by cooperation and collective action.



News

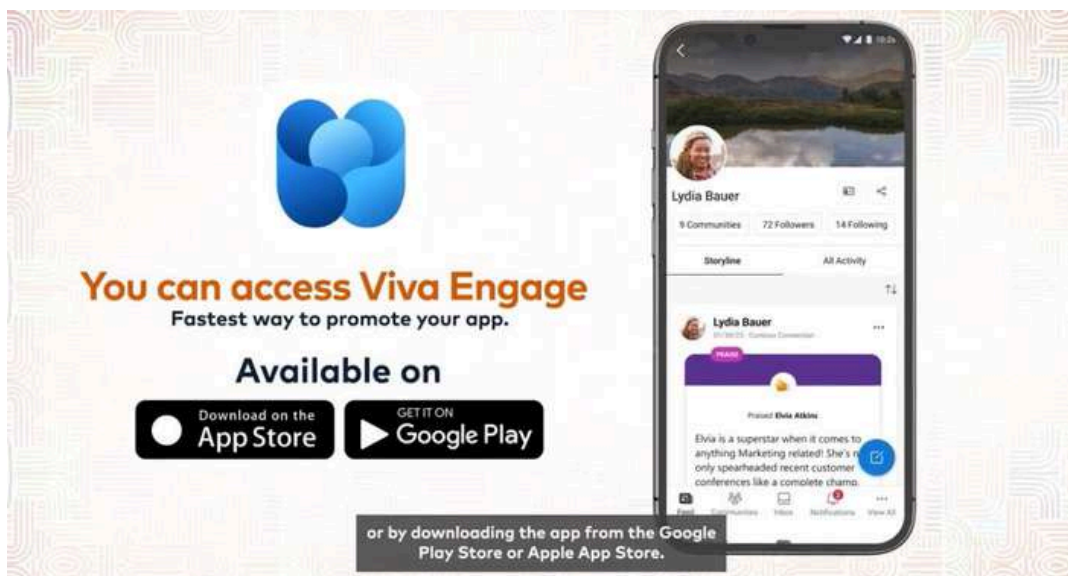
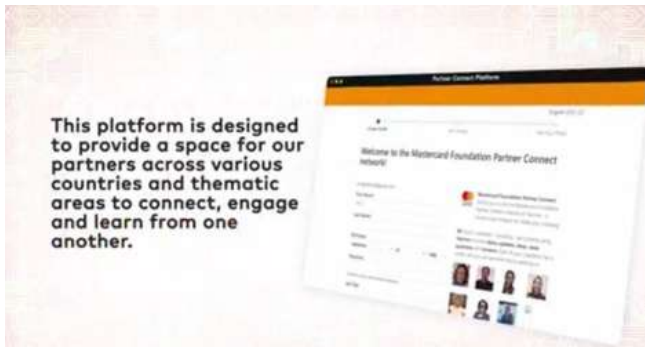
Launching a Collaborative Platform for the Foundation's Partners

Mastercard Foundation Partner Connect is intended to be a borderless online community, designed to allow partners to interact, collaborate, share knowledge, engage in enriching discussions and contact Foundation members outside of e-mail. The platform is designed to strengthen the connection between the Foundation and its partners, enhancing the overall impact through collaborative efforts.

The Partner Connect platform is now officially launched, and every partner is invited to join the platform!

To join, please reach out to this e-mail address to request access:

Partnerconnect@mastercardfdn.org





3 questions to...



Jacques Désiré Sidy SARR,
Impact Lead

What are your responsibilities as Impact Lead at the Mastercard Foundation, and how do you evaluate the effectiveness of the projects you manage?

As Impact Lead, my responsibilities include overseeing the impact of programs by offering technical guidance, executing the impact strategy and managing measurement processes like studies, evaluations and reviews. I ensure that the Foundation's programs align with the impact strategy. I also serve as a liaison between the program team and the research and learning teams, involving them as necessary for studies while helping the program team apply the findings from evaluations and research.

The Foundation measures the effectiveness of projects through its Impact Monitoring system. This includes the ongoing evaluation of projects to consistently track, assess, and communicate both the tangible and intangible results and impacts of the Foundation's initiatives and investments. Through this process, we hold ourselves accountable to young people, stakeholders and partners by showcasing how the resources entrusted to us are used and the results achieved. This allows us to guide strategic decisions using data-driven insights, which promotes real-time decision-making and improves efficiency. By identifying successes, challenges and lessons learned, we are promoting a culture of continuous learning. Additionally, by openly communicating our efforts and their impacts, we enhance stakeholder engagement and add to the global knowledge base.



3 questions to...

As an expert in Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL), what are the main challenges you face in establishing monitoring and evaluation frameworks to maximize the impact of the Foundation's projects?

In the area of program impact measurement, several key challenges emerge, especially concerning the quality and accessibility of data. It is not uncommon for collected data to be imprecise or poorly disaggregated, making it difficult to conduct the detailed analyses required to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. This shortcoming is often exacerbated by technical limitations or insufficient resources on the ground, compromising the reliability and continuity of data collection.

Another fundamental challenge lies in measuring long-term impacts and profound transformations, such as behavioral changes or systemic changes. Short-term monitoring mechanisms often fail to capture these enduring impacts, which may result in an underappreciation of a program's overall scope. This creates a tension between the need to demonstrate immediate results and the desire to evaluate deeper changes, which require longitudinal measurement tools.

Furthermore, stakeholder engagement is another major challenge. The various stakeholders, whether they are young people, partners or local governments, may have differing expectations. Some stakeholders prioritize short-term results, while evaluating sustainable impact requires a more comprehensive and long-term approach. This divergence can sometimes lead to an excessive focus on quick indicators, to the detriment of a deeper analysis of the actual impacts.

How does your experience help strengthen partners' evaluation systems and improve project effectiveness on a global scale?

The Mastercard Foundation plays a crucial role in measuring impact through an innovative strategy focused on several key points. It employs longitudinal evaluation methods to track the long-term impacts of its programs, allowing for the assessment of both immediate results and sustainable changes at the individual, community and ecosystem levels.

By incorporating evidence-based data into its decision-making, the Foundation adapts its interventions in real time, ensuring that its initiatives remain relevant to participants' needs and promoting positive changes within the ecosystem. Co-creation with stakeholders is a key priority; by engaging them in the evaluation process, the Foundation fosters greater transparency and collaboration.

This approach, focused on continuous learning, balances the assessment of immediate results with the pursuit of sustainable transformations, all while optimizing the effectiveness of interventions.



The Foundation's impact



Here are the key figures for this quarter:

The overall impact of the Mastercard Foundation in the WAEMU region in 2024

252 000

jobs have been created, **48%** of which are for young women

7 300 000

people have been reached on the ground, including **49%** women

62 %

of partner organizations are from Africa

9 %

of partner organizations are lead by the youth (Youth Led Organizations)



The Foundation's impact

Focus on the Mastercard Foundation Scholarship Program

The program vision: Through our Scholarship Program, we strive for each scholar to evolve into an ethical and entrepreneurial leader poised to enhance the lives of others by driving social transformation and economic growth, especially in Africa.

The Mastercard Foundation Scholarship Program is based on four dimensions to help each scholar become a transformative leader in their community:

- 1. Transformative Leadership:** Scholars in the Scholarship Program undergo training focused on ethical governance and inclusive development.
- 2. Community Service:** Each scholar participates in community service, instilling the value of giving back and contributing to society.
- 3. Transition to Dignified and Fulfilling Work:** Each scholar receives help to transition to the professional world.
- 4. Alumni Network:** The Mastercard Foundation Scholarship Program fosters strong connections with alumni who actively mentor new scholars.

50

Partner Institutions

The Mastercard Foundation Scholarship Program includes **over 50 partner institutions, universities and NGOs worldwide.**

40 000

Scholarships

Since its launch, the Mastercard Foundation Scholarship Program has awarded **over 40,000 scholarships**, allowing students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds to access quality secondary and tertiary education.

+70 %

Scholars in the Mastercard Foundation Scholarship Program are women, reflecting the program's commitment to promoting gender equality.



Impact Story



Learn about the inspiring journey of Achille Constantin Judicaël TCHIDEHOU, a Beninese student-entrepreneur and former scholar.

He joined the Mastercard Foundation Scholarship Program in 2021. In July 2024, he graduated from the **University of Abomey Calavi** with a vocational degree in Nutrition and Food Science and Technology, earning the title of top student in his field as well as overall top student in his degree program.

While pursuing his studies, Achille established his startup, Agro-Reference, which focuses on converting fruits grown by economically disadvantaged female farmers into organic and nutritious beverages, thereby supporting food security and the financial empowerment of these women.

Achille was accepted into the 2024-2025 cohort of the Mastercard Foundation Scholarship Program at Earth University in Costa Rica, in the Entrepreneurship category, and won the People's Choice Award for the best pitch at the « Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation » entrepreneurial competition.

Achille stood out for his commitment to community initiatives. He helped train 48 rural women in soybean processing, providing them with a new source of income.

He also launched the 'Empowerment Benin (YEB) » project, which brings together more than 300 young students and unemployed graduates, helping foster their professional development.

To learn more about the Mastercard Foundation Scholarship Program, please click [here](#)

Read more Mastercard Foundation Scholarship Program impact stories [here](#)



Partner Spotlight

Sobel Aziz Ngom, Executive Director of the Senegal Youth Consortium (CJS)

What is your perspective on African youth, and how do you envision their role in the current context?

60% of Africa's population is under the age of 25. These young people are our greatest asset, provided we include and value them. Beneath this statistic are millions of young talents, ideas and skills that, with the right support, have the potential to reshape our continent.

Many youth-led initiatives are engaging and innovating across various socio-economic sectors to address the challenges facing their communities. These young change-makers show they are willing to embrace responsibilities when given the chance.

Within this dynamic, the Senegal Youth Consortium (CJS) was created, founded on the belief that unity is strength. Alongside leaders from around ten organizations, we have repeatedly observed that youth structures are often mistakenly reduced to neighborhood activities. The CJS was therefore created to break this glass ceiling, radically change the perception that the government, international partners, the private sector and civil society have of youth organizations, and demonstrate that young people are not just credible participants but vital contributors to solving the issues that affect them.



What are the main objectives of the Senegal Youth Consortium (CJS), and how do you plan to achieve them?

The CJS currently brings together 18 member organizations, each providing expertise in areas such as civic engagement, volunteering, community development, popular education and the incubation and support of entrepreneurial initiatives, both in urban and rural settings.

Our efforts are focused on three pillars: bokk for inclusion, jàng for learning and ligeey for work. Through these three pillars, our goal is to build a society where inclusion is the norm, education is accessible to all and work is a source of dignity. Our ambition is to educate, engage and empower one million young Senegalese people for their socio-professional integration by 2030.





Partner Spotlight

How do the Youth Friendly Standards aim to rethink cooperation with young people to make it more inclusive?

Every year, tens of billions of CFA francs are invested in projects aimed at supporting youth empowerment. But how much of this money actually reaches the youth? The majority of funds are allocated to HR expenses, expertise, logistics, equipment, infrastructure, operations and communication, without prioritizing or even considering young people in these various areas of expenditure. The way governments, international institutions, cooperation agencies and the private sector engage with young people is often characterized by token actions rather than meaningful partnerships. While they all understand that to do better for young people, they must do better with young people, the reality is that they don't always know how to achieve this.

That's why the Senegal Youth Consortium developed the Youth Friendly Standards (YFS), in collaboration with UNICEF, Generation Unlimited, WeBridge Africa, the Mastercard Foundation, the International Youth Foundation, the European Union and hundreds of young leaders worldwide. The YFS are youth-friendly standards designed to serve as a roadmap for anyone seeking to shift the paradigm and systematically involve and value young people at every stage of their initiatives. Through the YFS, we can redefine the rules and unlock the potential of youth. Without investing a single extra franc, the impact of youth-oriented projects would be multiplied.

How does the Senegal Youth Consortium work with the Mastercard Foundation?

The Mastercard Foundation is a strategic partner of the Senegal Youth Consortium, with whom we share a common vision for the future of youth. This vision is embodied in the YEAH (Youth & Entrepreneurship in Agrifood - Hope) project, which aims to promote employment and entrepreneurship among economically disadvantaged young Senegalese men and women.

Currently in its launch phase, nearly 10 million dollars will be invested by 2028 to create opportunities in sectors such as agriculture, livestock, agrifood, digital technology and marketing. The YEAH project aligns with the shared vision of the CJS and the Mastercard Foundation, aiming to boost the local economy and provide professional opportunities to young men and women across Senegal.



CONSORTIUM
JEUNESSE
SENEGAL



Digital Spotlight

A Brief Look at Current Digital Trends

Launch: "Did you know webinar series"

The teams at the Mastercard Foundation's WAEMU office are constantly seeking to improve their tools and approaches to amplify their impact on the communities and young people they serve. The digital revolution in Africa has become a reality, offering various positive opportunities alongside challenges for agri-tech. To help young people capitalize on the advantages of an interconnected and smart world, a collective response is essential.

With this in mind, the Foundation has developed a brand new series of webinars called "*Did You Know?*". This monthly event is designed for the Foundation's partners to discuss the digital economy, share best practices and improve their understanding of these topics.

- The first episode, titled "Demystifying Artificial Intelligence," highlighted several key points: AI will quickly create jobs accessible to young people while requiring suitable skills to thrive. It must also address gender inequalities by empowering young women. In the long term, Africa can leverage its human capital by developing AI technologies suited to its realities while adopting an ecosystem approach that includes all stakeholders to remain globally competitive.
- Several experts came together for the second edition to analyze the impact of AI in the education technology sector in Africa. How can we ensure that marginalized communities have access to these strategies? Should policies be modified to facilitate the integration of AI into national educational systems? To guarantee equitable access to the opportunities offered by AI in health, education and employment, it is important that this technology be deployed in a responsible, ethical and inclusive manner.
- The third episode took place in November, focusing on social media and digital inclusion for young people. This session shed light on the social media revolution and its potential to create employment opportunities in the agricultural sector.





Behind the scenes



Three key events for Mastercard Foundation collaborators and partners in the last quarter of 2024

1

Executive Committee visit

The Mastercard Foundation recently welcomed its executive members for a visit to Senegal, focusing on local initiatives and the impact of its projects in the WAEMU region. The program included meetings with our partners, exchanges with program participants and an interactive panel discussion with young people.

The visit focused on four main areas:

- Agri-food systems
- Entrepreneurship
- Access to finance for young people
- Education and capacity building

2

Côte d'Ivoire Visit

From September 23 to 26, 2024, a delegation from the Mastercard Foundation visited Côte d'Ivoire to exchange views with its partners and players in the agricultural sector.

The visit included meetings with partners from the E4Y and Rizao programs, as well as a co-creation workshop with the Sephis Foundation, dedicated to women's entrepreneurship.

The delegation also visited raw materials production and processing units.

3

Partners Convening

The Mastercard Foundation closed the year under the motto "Road to 2025 with our partners" at the Partners Convening held in Saly, Senegal.

The event brought together partners and young participants to reflect and exchange ideas on the major challenges of agribusiness, entrepreneurship, digital access and training.

The meeting was also an opportunity to celebrate collaborations and the impact of the initiatives deployed, marked by distinctions honoring the commitment and remarkable contributions of the partners.



The Foundation worldwide

African Leaders Launch the African School of Governance (ASG) Initiative

In October 2024, the African School of Governance Foundation (ASGF) announced the establishment of the African School of Governance (ASG) in Kigali, Rwanda, an institution of higher learning designed to deliver world-class training, research and public policy engagement programs. Eminent African leaders have come together to take this decisive step, as the initiative is set to transform the continent's leadership landscape by addressing the diverse needs of leaders across Africa.

ASG aims to address the continent's urgent governance challenges by equipping emerging leaders with the mindset, skills and knowledge to provide effective leadership for Africa's future. The initiative brings together visionaries committed to creating a sustainable governance model rooted in African realities.

ASG is supported by the Mastercard Foundation as part of its "Young Africa Works" strategy, which aims to enable 30 million young Africans, 70% of them being women, to access dignified and fulfilling work opportunities by 2030.

This announcement marks an important milestone in Africa's governance journey. Thanks to the collective efforts of its founders and partners, the institution will help train the leaders Africa needs to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of the 21st century.



TEAM
WAEMU
WISHES
YOU A
**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR**



**Vous souhaitez contribuer à notre prochaine édition ?
N'hésitez pas à contacter Sophie Diakité et
à nous envoyer du contenu pour publication !**

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