



BURKINA FASO

**CREATION OF A TRAINING PROGRAMME AND
SUPPORT FOR CHILDMINDERS IN BURKINA FASO**

BURKINA FASO PREJEF

INTRODUCTION TO PE&D

Planète Enfants & Développement (PE&D) has been working since 1984 to protect, educate, and integrate the most vulnerable children. We empower families, educators, local associations, and public authorities to provide children with a safe, non-violent, stable, and stimulating environment, an essential condition for their well-being and healthy development. Our work begins with a focus on early childhood, the critical period for growth and development that shapes the rest of a child's life.

In August of 2020, the French Development Agency (AFD: Agence Française de Développement) co-financed a multi-country program agreement with PE&D entitled "Investing in Early Childhood" (Investir dans la Petite Enfance). The program agreement supports projects including the establishment of nurseries, the provision of professional training, the improvement of preschool conditions, the creation of play areas, and more in Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Nepal, and Vietnam. The first three-year phase concluded in July 2023, allowing for deeper understanding of the main takeaways from initial projects.

IN BURKINA FASO

In Burkina Faso since 2004, PE&D has been developing early childhood projects through various partnerships. We have created a training program for childminders as part of a vocational training project for vulnerable young women in Ouagadougou and Ouahigouya.

Population: 22,1 million

Capital: Ouagadougou

Official language: French

Infant mortality rate (under 5): 83 per thousand*

Pre-school gross enrolment rate: 7%*

*World Bank, 2021

WHY ?

● INVESTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "early childhood development (from pregnancy to 8 years old) is crucial for upholding every child's right to survive and thrive [...] The period from pregnancy to the age of the 3 is the most critical as the brain develops more rapidly than at any other period. 80% of a baby's brain is formed during this age. For healthy brain development during these years, children need a safe, secure, and nurturing environment, along with proper nutrition and stimulation from their parents or caregivers. It is a window of opportunity to lay the foundation for lifelong health and well-being, which also has an impact on the next generation." ¹

“**The first 3000 days (from conception to 7 years old) are a period when learning is most intense and effective, almost effortless**

Agnès Florin

Agnès Florin, Professor Emeritus of Child Psychology and Education at Nantes University ²

Agnès Florin highlights, "the importance of stimulating [the child], meeting their needs, whatever they may be, surrounding the child with love and support during the critical period [...]". "Providing the child with regular opportunities to be active, solve problems with the help of an adult if needed, and have positive interactions with their surroundings allows them to become truly independent, responsible, and aware of their actions [...] Engaging in object manipulation, play, walks, reading, music, sharing ideas and emotions, and eliciting laughter nourishes the child's brain and contributes to healthy physical and mental growth."

● INVESTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD IN BURKINA FASO

Despite an increasingly difficult security context with growing terrorist attacks, Burkina Faso's economic growth remains solid (6% in 2018). The economy is predominantly reliant on agriculture, which employs nearly 80% of the working population. However, the level of poverty is 40.1%, due in part to strong demographic growth. The northern region faces the highest poverty rates (70.4%), and the population of the underdeveloped districts of the city of Ouagadougou is growing considerably in precarious conditions.

PE&D, which has been working in the early childhood sector in Burkina Faso since 2010, has noted a growing demand for early childhood services, with very limited and low-quality options available.

Children under the age of 5 account for 17% of the population, yet the pre-school enrollment rate for children aged 3 to 6 is just 4.1%, one of the lowest in the world. Burkina Faso recently adopted legislation governing crèches that support early development and education for children aged 3 to 36 months, and the first public crèche opened in 2020. However, there is still no appropriate training that provides certification in the industry, and poor quality is hurting the emergence of early childhood services. [...]

Studies show that over 70% of the active population is employed in the informal economy, and that unemployment particularly affects women and young people. Lack of education and training are the main causes of unemployment and underemployment - 71% of the working-age population is neither educated or literate. Because of their lack of qualifications, women are forced to stay at home to look after their children and develop Income-Generating Activities (IGAs) within the home. IGAs often generate low income and have very little impact on the family's overall income.

1. <https://www.who.int/fr/publications-detail/9789241514064>

2. <https://www.cerveauetpsycho.fr/sd/developpement-enfant/cerveau-psycho-n143-23634.php>

Due to the lack of information about early childhood, and a shortage of qualified professionals, young children in Burkina Faso receive very little stimulation. When their mothers are economically active, they are either taken with them to work or left in the care of young women with very little knowledge about early childhood education and development. For example, in the city of Ouahigouya, the capacity of the Early Childhood Education and Development Services (SEEJE: Services d'Eveil et d'Education des Jeunes Enfants) to care for children aged 0-5 is estimated at 1.6%.

The National Institute of Training in Social Work (INFTS: Institut National de Formation en Travail Social), and the Ministry of Education and Literacy only train preschool professionals. Professionals in nurseries then are trained for preschool, but not for early childhood.

Many parents find it difficult to leave their children in nurseries due to problems with delayed development, physical violence, and workers recruited without training due to a shortage in qualified professionals.

WHAT & WHEN

In this context in order to implement quality training, adequate and accessible services for all, PE&D developed a childminder Basic Qualification Certification training (CQB: Certificat de Qualification de Base) in 2018 for vulnerable women aged 18 to 35 in urban areas (Ouagadougou and Ouahigouya) and rural areas (Saaba, Tanghin, Dassouri, Koubri, Pabré, Oula and Tangaye).

THIS PROJECT HAS SEVERAL COMPONENTS:

1. Designing the training

- **A scientific committee** was set up at the government level consisting of six early childhood and vocational education professionals: the Director of Child Development, the Director of INFTS, the Director of Professional Training Engineering and Standards, the PE&D Early Childhood Project Manager, the Project Manager, and a pediatrician. In total, the six-person committee met 10 times over the course of a year. To establish this committee, Terms of Reference (ToRs) were approved by the two ministries responsible for nominating committee members.

This committee was approved by the government which delegated representatives from various ministries.

- Creation of **11 theoretical training modules** with French and Burkinabe experts, approved by the scientific committee (3 versions were submitted before approval)

Module examples : the layout and equipment of nurseries to create a safe and healthy space, child care and nutrition, early-learning activities through play, entrepreneurship and developing a nursery (in collaboration with Entrepreneurs du Monde), etc.

- **A guidance meeting:** Members of the scientific committee outlined the specific features of the profession and a certification reference framework:

1. **Analysis of the situation:** description of the profession, the childminder job, the levels of qualification, the nature of the job and working conditions.
2. **Equipment organization guide:** outline of what technical equipment is needed to create the training course.
3. **Training standards:** description of the nature of the qualification and the skills required for childminders.
4. **Certification guidelines :** how the childminders should be trained and certified.

- **Validation workshops by the ministry :**

3 meetings were organized by the scientific committee to work on the amendment and validation of the modules:

11 were approved by the scientific committee (technical modules regarding the profession of childminder)

4 modules on entrepreneurship and job search were entrusted to Entrepreneur du Monde (EdM) consultant with an independent consultant from the Ministry in charge of vocational education.

2. Training of childminders

- **Awareness raising campaigns** were organized to advertise the training and the eligibility criteria.

- **Selecting beneficiaries:** as part of a project already defined for vulnerable women, eligibility criteria were defined on the basis of educational level, marital status (young widows, children to support, etc), and motivation criteria based on their career objectives.

A **selection committee** was set up in each locality for one day. In total, 9 committees with 6-7 people included: social actions technicians, inspectors, representatives of municipalities, local authorities, and the county council, professionals from the women's coordination, local organizations, members of PE&D and community representatives. Applicants submitted their applications within a 3-day window (time limited due to the large number of applications received). Each file was collected by the municipalities and submitted to the committee for approval.

PE&D also provided the committee with a list of criteria and a grid for the selection of candidates. In turn, the committee shared applications with the community representatives, in order to get feedback on candidates, such as whether a woman was known to have resorted to child abuse.

Note: all of these documents, reference frameworks and training modules have been validated by the government of Burkina Faso. They are "living" documents and will be continually reread, updated and improved. Future training sessions can start directly from the "Selection" step.



TRAINING PROCESS

SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF WOMEN, TRAINING ORGANIZATION

1 Training a pool of trainers (ToT)

4 people in total made up of early childhood professionals, vocational education professionals, to take into account the profession in order to improve entrepreneurship. This pool of trainers is responsible for the implementation of the training.

The training of trainers (ToT) lasted 5 days, and was led by an inspector of Early Childhood Educators (ECE) and a sociologist for the technical training, by a professional from the ministry responsible for vocational training, as well as a representative of the NGO Entrepreneur du Monde dedicated to entrepreneurship training.

2 Training (selection and recruitment of women, training organization)

The 4 trainers then provided technical and entrepreneurial instruction to 18 ECE trainers (in child protection and vocational training).

For the various training sessions, one pair of technical trainers and one pair of entrepreneurial trainers were assigned to groups of childminders (30 childminders for the two pairs: one technical and one entrepreneurial). Each childminder received 10 days of technical training and 2 days of entrepreneurial training in rooms rented by the committees, for a total of 12 consecutive days of training.

Once the training was completed, the women were given a three-month work placement in an organization. During the selection process, the teams identified women who were already working in nurseries or care who were able to carry out their internship in their facility and take on other women. In two localities, however, there were no childcare facilities: pilot crèches were opened and several women worked together to take in children.

3 Supporting childminders during their training

All the women were accompanied by a supervisory monitoring group that monitored the SEEJE (composed of social action inspectors, INTFS, child development, regional management and EJE at commune level: 4 people in Ouagadougou and Ouahigouya) and by a pedagogical supervision group for ongoing training (composed of 6 DDE inspectors, 2 representatives from INTFS). Both groups observed and accompanied the childminders during their training courses.

To this end, PE&D created a post-training roadmap for internship follow-ups to assess the childminders' progress in terms of know-how and interpersonal skills (how to integrate into a team, respect for rules, etc.). Each childminder received two observations to evaluate their practice, give advice and monitor the evolution of their professional practice (how they integrated the recommendations received during the first supervision).

4 Certification : CQB (Basic Qualification Certification)

The Permanent Secretariat of the National Certification Commission (SPCNC) was in charge of certification, which took place in a "plateau technique", i.e. a public crèche where the women had to work to put their skills into practice. Due to a lack of materials, PE&D provided the crèche.

The SPCNC organized the certifications (fee-paying service), while PE&D took care of community mobilization and technical support.

The SPCNC proposed a timetable and a budget for logistics and to be able to pay the members of the jury and the organizing committee, including trainers from the ministries and other professionals from the Permanent Secretariat.

Certification by habilitation: emphasis on practice rather than theory. The technical platform is therefore essential for certification, with a precise list of equipment. A personal assessment of the women's skills, knowledge, experience and career plans was carried out prior to training. After certification, the women are reassessed to evaluate if their assessment has evolved or changed. The assessment is repeated just before the post-certification support.

Between 2020 and 2023, 300 women were trained and supported, including 257 who took the certification course and 250 who obtained it.

Some were unable to submit their files (no internship, files were not compiled, etc. PE&D subsequently helped the women complete their official papers.). Some women were unable to finish because of Ramadan, and were therefore unable to pass their certification or complete their internship.

The women who did not obtain their CQB received a training certificate and could be hired in childcare facilities, but only those who had obtained the CQB could set up their own SEEJE.

47 SEEJE were set up by 82 professionals. 153 were hired by various childcare organizations. The remaining 15 have decided not to pursue this career.

5 Childminders post-training support

At the end of the evaluation carried out during the training, each woman decides whether to set up a business or look for a job with an existing organization.

Option 1: Creation of a SEEJE

To obtain premises and reception areas, we approach communities with the help of our supervisors (PE&D), who help childminders set up their spaces.

Childminders first draw up a business plan, then an action plan, and work with the TPE (Très Petite Entreprise and professional integration: PE&D and EdM employees) support staff to assess the need for investment, working capital and equipment. The childminder prepares a market survey and follows up with an action plan based on the results. Childminders are referred to Micro Finance Institutes (MFIs) during business plan development.

Once both plans have been completed, and the identification of the premises and design of the layout have also been completed, the childminders are guided in their communication plan to promote their SEEJE and enroll children through leaflets, public events, services offered, etc.

Once the premises have been equipped and children are enrolled, the public technical services at commune or regional level (level in charge of the ministry) evaluate the program's activities and premises and make recommendations for improvement, such as reinforcement on a particular theme, etc. The implementation of these recommendations is supported by the PE&D teams, who organize them and provide follow-up coaching on how to fulfill them. accompany the childminders in following up the recommendations (follow-up coaching).

NB: To date, there are no official specifications for points of assessment and recommendations for improvement: awaiting validation and adoption of the specifications by the Council of Ministers (Phase 2 of the project).

For the first six months after the creation of the SEEJEs, the PE&D teams met with the childminders on a very regular basis (1 to 3 meetings a week). The meetings slowly became less frequent over time, but the teams were always available to respond to needs.

In Phase 2 of the project, the teams will continue to provide support in addition to implementing a childminder grouping model so that childminders themselves can provide training through the creation of childminder associations (legal status to be defined). These associations will be strengthened so that they can sustainably continue certain functions (training, support for new childminders, etc.).

6 Ongoing training

For childminders who have opted to set up an SEEJE, ongoing training is offered by PE&D teams and VSE support managers on a range of topics: financial education, business management, marketing, communication, leadership, management, revenue and expense accounts, and balance sheets.

Option 2: Employment with existing providers

We have mapped out the childcare providers likely to be able to hire childminders by canvassing the areas where childminders would like to work.

Additional training in job search techniques (CV, covering letter) is offered.

A first contact with potential employers is set up by PE&D teams to facilitate networking. A pre-interview is organized for the childminders to prepare them for recruitment interviews.

If the childminders themselves have identified an organization, PE&D can provide them with a letter of recommendation, or the teams can travel to meet the provider to support their application. Finally, PE&D teams can also go on site, with the agreement of the organizations, to continue to monitor them and discuss with the direct supervisors and/or managers to assess their performance and support them, such as by planning other training courses if necessary.



RECONVERSION

When a childminder who has been hired finally wants to open her own business, or vice versa, PE&D supports her in her project with the same support methods described above.

For childminders who have decided to work in other fields, PE&D tries to keep in touch to find out how the training has helped them in their new jobs, and how the initial training helps them. All trained women are monitored, particularly those working with 3-6 year-olds in after-school care.

CHILDMINDERS NETWORK

A network of childminders has been set up to provide ongoing training, share experiences and call on experts so that they can exchange ideas with each other and with other early childhood professionals. It's a sharing of experience at both technical and management levels: microfinance structures, structures that finance women in certain areas, technical aspects, leadership, animation, games, activities. Childminders can call on other professionals to support and nurture their practice, and work as a team.

The network should continue without PE&D's intervention in Phase 2 of the project: the emphasis is on networking between childminders in the area where they are, so that they can easily meet each other, and PE&D and other partners can provide support if necessary. Mentor childminders have been appointed to lead these networks and create a group in a given area to facilitate meetings (creating project sustainability).

WhatsApp groups between childminders have been set up to encourage them to share experiences, difficulties, and solutions in the field and recommendations for activities to do with children.

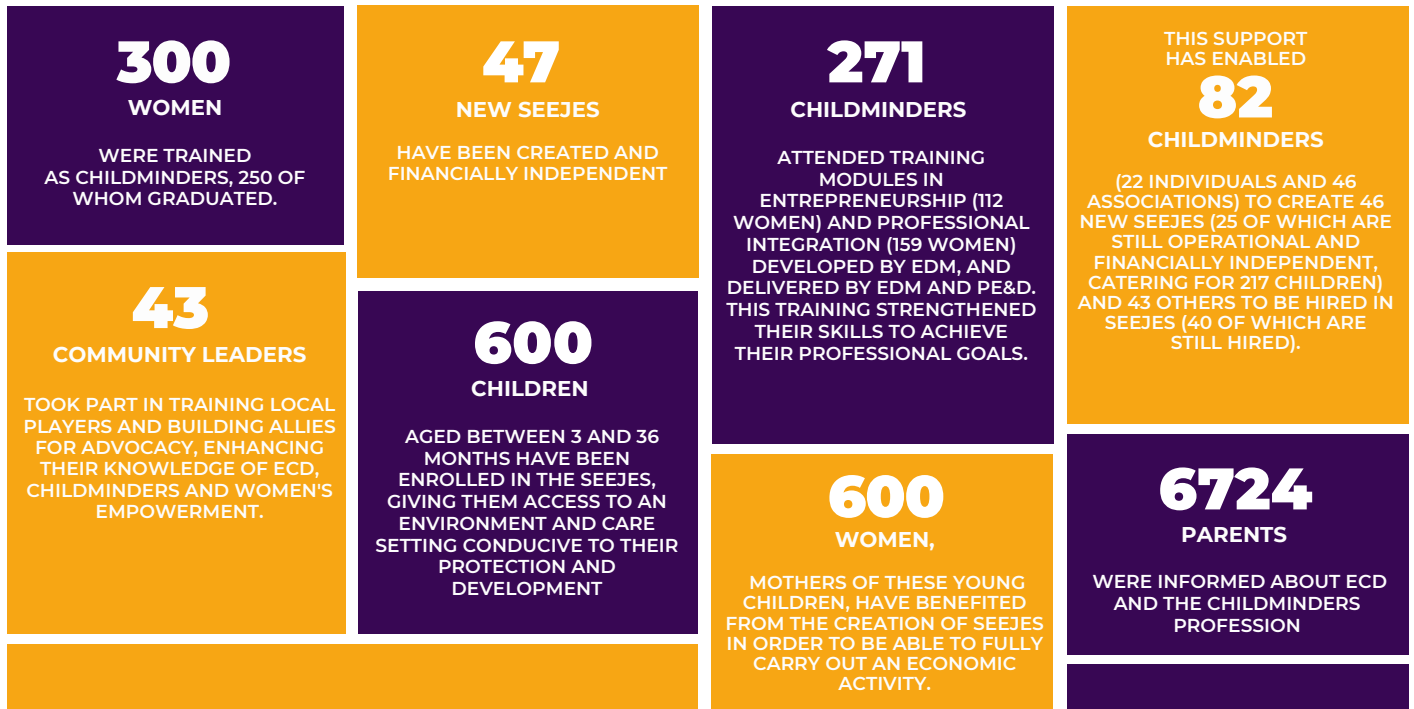
Finally, PE&D worked with Manivelle Studio to develop video vignettes for each training module, featuring a childminder. The videos have been put online on various platforms such as Youtube, accessible here:

<https://www.youtube.com/@lemetierdassistantematerne7286>

and on a Facebook page accessible here : <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=323753705883586>



RESULTS 2022-2023



WHAT LESSONS CAN WE LEARN?

- 1 The training enabled the women to take the initiative and gain self-confidence.
- 2 There is a real need for childminders and services that are well suited to the needs of parents due to their easy access, lower cost than other forms of childcare, flexible hours compared to existing crèches that only accept children continuously throughout the day and not on an ad hoc basis or at night. Some childminders are obliged to turn children away.
- 3 Some childminders had to open several organizations (quota: 8 children per childminder and up to 10 if all can walk with normally maximum 40 children).
- 4 Mutual assistance between childminders has been observed on many occasions, with some mothers (single, isolated, very young mothers) receiving free childcare on an occasional basis.
- 5 Coaching was very well received: it's a new concept, a new profession, and there were no models, no references and no examples.
- 6 Creating links between childminders is extremely important, and has been one of the keys to the project's success: by sharing experiences and advice, childminders feel less alone, less isolated, and benefit from the advantages of teamwork.
- 7 Locally opened crèches are adapted to the local context and needs
- 8 Childcare conditions (number of children, safety, quality of service) must be used to define a business model.

CAPITALIZATION

Two Capitalisation guides have been developed for childminders wishing to open a SEEJE (*available on request*).

- Proposal for a practical guide to assisting childminders in setting up an Early Childhood Education and Development Service (SEEJE: Service d'Eveil et d'Education des Jeunes Enfants) (in French only)
- Guide to the Development and Management of a Service for the education of young children from 3 months to 3 years of age (SEEJE) (in French only)

OUTLOOK

- Continue to work with the government, standardizing training and supervision of SEEJEs at the national level
- Make training sustainable: establish training center that provides training + ensure government support

● **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Attitudes are slowly changing: before, neighbors looked after the children for free; now paid childminders look after them.
- During technical training, ideally the entrepreneurship trainers should be present (not possible during the project due to budget constraints).
- Open up training to older women (who are more self-confident): those who have already had children are more likely to set up new providers, while younger women tend to opt for professional integration.
- Refine home selection criteria (limitations for women who have no room at home for children or no private accommodation, courtyard with no fence, single room, etc.)
- Project open to men in the future
- Home-based job: consider the spouse, the place of the husband and his family, consider the place of childminders' children
- Two weeks' training is not enough. Topics that could be added: games with recycled materials, first aid, gender stereotypes, etc.
- Review childminder kit: no consumables (diapers), toy management and use
- Childminders are very autonomous: to what extent?

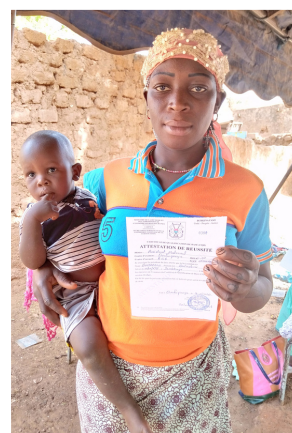
NOLWENN DESCHARD

EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERT
OF PLANÈTE ENFANTS & DÉVELOPPEMENT

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JULY 2023



WHO WE ARE ?

Planète Enfants & Développement (PE&D) has been working since 1984 to protect, educate and integrate the most vulnerable children.

IN BURKINA FASO

In Burkina Faso since 2004, PE&D has been developing early childhood projects through various partnerships. We have set up a training programme for childminders as part of a vocational training project for vulnerable young women in several parts of the country.

THIS PROJECT HAS SEVERAL COMPONENTS :

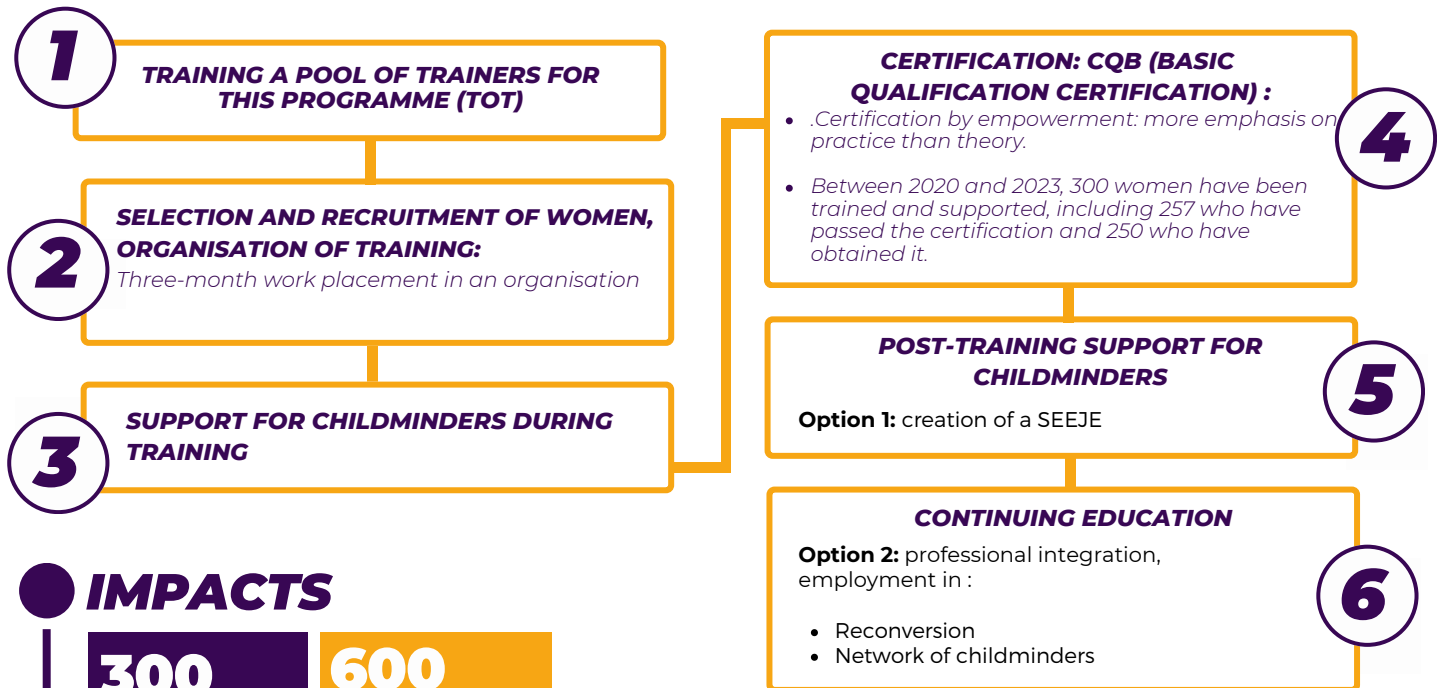
1. PREPARING FOR TRAINING

- A scientific committee
- A scoping meeting
- Creation of 11 theoretical training modules
- Ministry validation workshops

2. TRAINING FOR CHILDMINDERS

- Awareness-raising campaigns
- A targeting committee
- Targeting beneficiaries

TRAINING PROCESS



IMPACTS

300

WOMEN WERE TRAINED

600

CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN 3 AND 36 MONTHS WERE ENROLLED IN THE SEEJE

6724

PARENTS WERE MADE AWARE OF THE ECD

82

CHILDMINDERS HAVE CREATED 47 NUSERIES

ENSEIGNEMENTS & CONCLUSION

- **+ SELF-CONFIDENCE THANKS TO TRAINING**
- **ADAPTATION TO PARENTS' NEEDS**
- **MUTUAL SUPPORT BETWEEN CHILDMINDERS**
- **BUSINESS MODEL TO BE ADAPTED**

CAPITALISATION

TWO CAPITALISATION GUIDES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED FOR CHILDCARE ASSISTANTS WHO WISH TO OPEN A SEEJE (AVAILABLE ON REQUEST)

"Proposal for a practical guide to assisting childminders in setting up a Service d'Eveil et d'Education des Jeunes Enfants (SEEJE)".

"Guide Conseil sur le Développement et la Gestion d'un Service d'Eveil et d'Education du Jeune Enfant de 3 mois à 3 ans (SEEJE)" (in French only)