

Project Completion Review - Top Sheet

This Top Sheet captures the headlines on the programmes performance over the course of its lifetime. Teams should attach summary sheets from each annual review over the life of the programme.

Review Date:	09/03/2017
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Title: La Pépinière: DFID DRC Programme for Adolescent Girls		
Programme Code: 203823	Start Date: 01/04/2013	End Date: 31/12/2017
If programme was closed >1 month early please describe in a few words why.	n/a	

Summary of Programme Performance

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Programme Score	C	B	A	A	A
Risk Rating	High	Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

Financial Position

Original Programme Value	GBP 4,600,000
Extensions/ amendments	No cost extension approved in January 2017 (from October 2017 to December 2017)
Log-frame revisions (with dates)	November 2015 December 2016
Total programme spend	GBP 3,980,632.58

Follow up actions required following closure

- DFID, together with SDDirect to set up final lesson sharing event with other adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) empowerment programmes.
- DFID to ensure lessons learnt from La Pépinière research are fully incorporated into new programmes being developed, particularly those that focus on gender, education, private sector development, and family planning.
- DFID DRC to consider alternative youth engagement and accountability mechanisms given the closure of La Pépinière .
- DFID DRC and SDDirect to work on a one pager on Safeguarding to share best practice and lessons learned from La Pépinière with other DFID programmes working with adolescent girls and young women.

A: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

DevTracker Link to Business Case:	http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-203823/
DevTracker Link to Log frame:	http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-203823/

Context

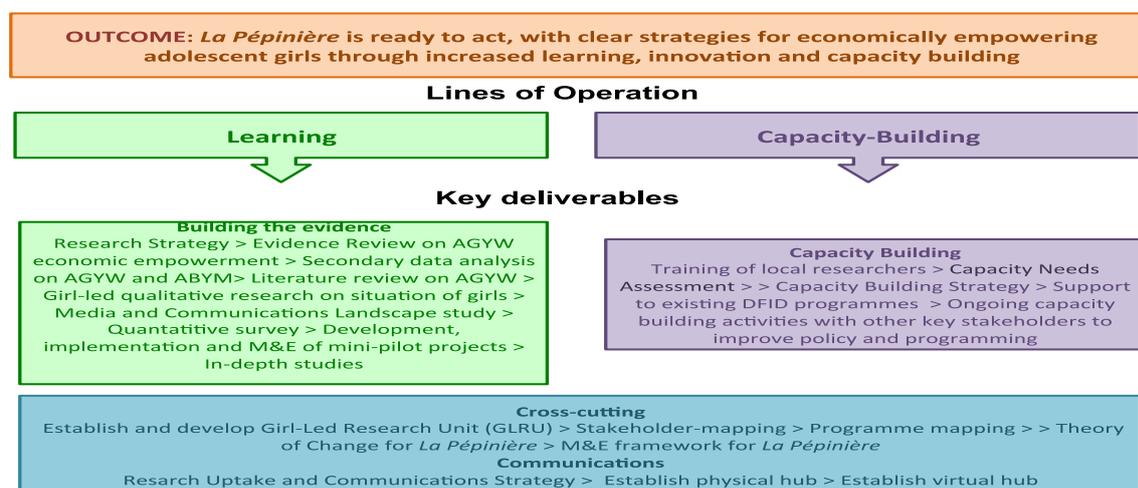
The DRC is one of the worst places to be born a girl¹. It's one of the lowest ranking countries on the global gender inequality index (ranking 153 out of 159 countries) and hasn't improved significantly in 10 years, remaining at the bottom of the league table. Women and girls in DRC are often disempowered, exercise little influence over decision-making either in the home or the public sphere and face some of the highest violence levels in the world. Extreme levels of poverty and conflict exacerbate high levels of gender inequality, and entrenched gender norms dictate that girls and women are inferior to boys and men and should be "submissive" and "obedient".

Women's economic empowerment is one of the biggest potential levers for boosting global prosperity. Yet, in DRC women and girls have limited access to credit, land, productive assets, and technology. If they work, they operate mostly in the informal economy as micro-entrepreneurs, with limited opportunities for formal employment. They face additional barriers like discrimination, violence and harassment. In Kinshasa, adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) mainly engage in the care economy and income generating activities like tailoring, cooking, hair-dressing, catering and selling small items. Young women operate in highly gendered sectors and often combine school with economic activity, paying for their own school fees and books.

Outline of programme and what it has achieved

In order to respond to this context, DFID DRC provided £3.9 million over five years (2013 – 2017) to tackle the barriers preventing the economic empowerment of adolescent girls and young women in Kinshasa. La Pépinière was implemented by Social Development Direct (SDDirect) and the Centre Regionale de Recherches et de Documentation sur les Femmes, le Genre, et la Construction de la Paix dans la Region de Grands Lacs (CERED-GL). M&C Saatchi was part of the original consortium but withdrew after the inception phase. It tested the assumption that investing in economic outcomes for adolescent girls could have a positive knock-on effect and improve their wider situation.

La Pépinière successfully improved the evidence base on women and girls by producing a significant body of research and testing 'what works' through a series of mini pilot projects. The programme further challenged and supported existing DFID programmes to improve their gender outcomes across a range of sectors (economic development, humanitarian, governance, health and education). Evidence generated by La Pépinière's research and pilots influenced a broad range of external partners to recognise and increasingly integrate a focus on AGYW. The programme innovatively put girls at the centre of programming as they were involved directly in research design and implementation, and trained as researchers themselves. Figure 1 below shows a visual presentation of the programmes structure.



¹ D

Key Achievements

- **Strengthening the evidence base on how to empower women and girls.** The programme has produced a significant body of research and evidence about the needs and aspirations of AGYW. As a result, La Pépinière contributed to filling a severe evidence gap on the realities of Congolese women and girls' situations and building understanding of what interventions could work in this context.
- **Putting evidence into action.** During the programme three mini-pilots were completed, which reached **1,150 AGYW**. All three completed projects demonstrated positive changes for participants.

Overview of La Pepiniere's Mini-Pilots

Building girls social capital and networks: Supported AGYW to have the power to make and act on economic decisions by increasing their financial independence, control over savings and decision making over economic activities. This was achieved through peer networks and mentoring techniques. The pilot was delivered by *Si Jeunesse Savait (SJS)*, a not-for-profit Congolese youth organisation working on women's rights. 278 participants were supported, with 62 networks established, such as formal self-help groups or microcredit groups.

Mobile money: Enabled AGYW to access mobile money savings and training to improve their ability to manage their economic assets and make business decisions. The pilot was delivered by *UMOJA Développement Durable (UMOJA)*, a Congolese NGO which aims to foster sustainable development in the DRC through entrepreneurship. Of the 300 girls supported, 240 developed their savings habits and 131 used Mobile Money accounts each month. There was also some evidence of increased economic activity despite the difficult economic environment.

Positive role models of young women's economic empowerment: A series of short documentaries were developed called *Moseka la Brave* about an inspirational adolescent girl, living in challenging circumstances in Kinshasa. The series was disseminated through 'video clubs', community cinema and television which facilitated group's discussions about discrimination against women. The pilot was implemented by the international NGO *Search for Common Ground (SFCG)*. 10 episodes were developed in total, which led to over 10,000 interactions.

- **Putting girls at the centre of programming.** The programme demonstrated the benefits of youth-led research by unlocking different perspectives that only peer to peer interactions seem able to generate, particularly in terms of the nature of relationships that girls enter into and the expectations placed on them. For example, the research showed how AGYW pay for their schooling, take care of their own needs and support their family once they have some economic income; or how they may maintain multiple relationships or engage in transactional sex to cover their needs. AGYW generated and disseminated research to the communities and peers themselves. This had a powerful impact and acted as an effective mechanism to promote the awareness of AGYW's rights at the local level.
- **Supporting a movement of voices to support gender equality.** The DRC political context remains a challenging environment to achieve progress on gender issues. But La Pépinière helped to establish a visible and active network of Congolese gender champions, who remain passionate advocates for advancing the rights of women and girls. They include leaders in civil society, government and the private sector. The research added credibility to their voice.
- **Significant achievements were made within a short period of time.** Despite operational challenges, the programme made substantial progress in a short space of time, demonstrating tangible results in a number of key areas. Firstly, it established a functional Girl Led Research Unit (GLRU), which serves as an innovative youth-led development mechanism. Secondly, it supported DFID to mainstream gender into key programme areas (humanitarian, education, health, governance). Thirdly, the research and piloting model expanded the evidence base on the realities of adolescent girls in the DRC and produced a theory of change for the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women in the DRC.

B: PERFORMANCE AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall Outcome Assessment

The programme outcome is: “La Pépinière has clear strategies in place to catalyse the economic empowerment of adolescent girls and young women”. Progress is measured with the following indicators and milestones:

Indicator	Target	Progress
New business case for support to adolescent girls and young women	Full business case (for next phase) approved and procurement completed	<u>Partially met</u> : New BC developed but not been submitted for approval because of ongoing discussions about DFID DRC’s strategic direction. In hindsight, this indicator was not the appropriate one to measure whether La Pépinière’s strategies could catalyse further work on economic empowerment – a better indicator would be developing a rigorous theory of change which could shape future interventions, both in sectoral and stand-alone programming.
Evidence that La Pépinière’s innovative capacity building strategies are changing perceptions of key stakeholders with regards to AGYW’s capabilities	75% of AGYW key stakeholders report a positive change in perception re. AGYW capabilities and/ or importance of their participation in programmes, as a result of Gender Champions or GLRU engagement or other La Pépinière interventions.	<u>Not fully reported</u> as intended ² . Only very few people answered the question in the SDDirect survey of 39 key stakeholders developed to collect information. But high satisfaction rates were reported (90%), and of the 5 stakeholder in-depth interviews conducted 4 mentioned specific areas where perception or approach has shifted as a result of La Pépinière interventions (80%).
AGYW mini-pilot beneficiaries show improvement in at least one key dimension of economic empowerment (engagement in new/ increased social or economic activities; decision making etc.)	5-10 % shift in key variables among selected group of AGYW mini-pilot beneficiaries related to EE	<u>Met</u> : The results of all three of the mini-pilots exceeded expectations in terms of improving financial independence, whilst two demonstrated improvements in AGYW decision making on the use of their savings, but only one project met targets for achieving increases in enabling AGYW to determine their choice of employment. Results disaggregate as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % shift of AGYW who report financial independence³: SJS⁴: 5.12%; SFCG: 7.17%; UMOJA: 9.18% 2. % shift of AGYW reporting being able to decide on the use of their savings (control over savings): SJS: 9.86%; SFCG⁵: 0%; UMOJA⁶: 26.98% 3. % shift of AGYW involved with the project who report they can now decide on the choice of employment: SJS: 2.82%; SFCG: 3.13%; UMOJA: 9.52%

² The programme completion review included discussions with gender champions, local delivery partners, mini-pilot beneficiaries, girl researchers and the Ministry of Gender. All stakeholders were positive overall about what La Pépinière achieved in such a short space of time and wanted to see further work from DFID in the area of adolescent girl’s empowerment. Benefits included increased capacity of partners, attitudinal change with regards to the capabilities of AGYW to make a meaningful contribution to work and recognition of the benefits of youth engagement.

³ Financial independence is derived from a) total income generated from labour/ productive activities and b) total income received from others (gifts, transfers, expenses covered by relatives), where a is greater than b that gives a score of 1 indicating positive financial independence, where a is less than b the score is 0, indicating no financial independence.

⁴ Si Jeunesse Savait

⁵ Search for Common Ground

⁶ Umoja Developpement Durable

La Pépinière broadly met expectations against end of programme targets. It has put in place strategies to catalyse the economic empowerment of AGYW, and delivered added impact by developing learning more broadly around the personal and social empowerment of AGYW. The work of the girl researchers and gender champions has helped to catalyse the economic empowerment of adolescent girls and young women by raising the visibility of this issue in Kinshasa. The evidence generated also provides a tangible resource base that other programmes can draw on to catalyse economic empowerment and the mini-pilots have shown promising direct results. Testing the Theory of Change through targeted programming and mainstreaming gender across other DFID DRC interventions is the next step.

Output Score and Description

The overall output score is A. Progress at the output level has been strong overall. A key highlight includes the enhanced capacity of the girl researchers and their ability to not only conduct high quality research relatively independently, but also to disseminate widely across communities, serving to raise the visibility of gender issues. The programme actively engaged 20 highly supportive and influential gender champions who continue to have the ability to influence and achieve change for AGYW.

Lessons and how these have been shared

- 1) Strong evidence of ‘what works’ and ‘what doesn’t’ on AGYW empowerment – the programme has developed the evidence base on female social and economic empowerment, which is directly applicable to the DRC but also has a wider relevance internationally. DFID and SDDirect have shared resources with central policy teams and interested country offices which have shaped their thinking (e.g the Female Economic Empowerment Programme in Mozambique).
- 2) Unique role of youth- led development: engaging target groups directly in programming leads to better results - aside from the core research findings, La Pépinière has provided a demonstration effect at least of the great potential of employing peer-researchers to unearth rich and valuable findings about sensitive issues in the lives of AGYW; the strong demand of communities for feedback and the value of deploying peer-researchers in this process; and the credibility that being evidence based adds to youth voice interventions.
- 3) Unpacking linkages between social and economic empowerment for girls in the DRC - the relationship for AGYW is complex and not well understood. La Pépinière has highlighted the range of social issues that can act as a barrier to economic empowerment, such as household norms, and conversely how poverty impacts on access to educational opportunities that provide young people with the skills to generate a decent income.
- 4) We need to target AGYW specifically in our sectoral programmes - the major opportunities for AGYW empowerment in the DRC lie in improving access to secondary education and family planning/health services; strengthening awareness of rights; and access to economic opportunities. La Pépinière engaged with programmes in these areas to build capacity on how to integrate gender equality and target and respond to the needs of AGYW. This has achieved some progress. But a mainstreaming effort ex-post can only go so far. Gender equality and results for women and girls need to be prioritised up front in programme design, so that gender equality isn’t an “add on” during implementation.
- 5) It is difficult to raise the visibility of gender issues. But the network of active and high level gender champions from civil society, government and the private sector provided a good entry point to advocacy. It takes time to establish such networks. Because of the profile of gender champions (thought leaders and often extremely busy), programmes need to work flexibly to leverage the benefits from working with them.
- 6) The geographic location of the GLRU and gender champions in Kinshasa yielded great potential to influence other donors and Congolese decision makers in politics, civil society and private sector. It limited how far La Pépinière’s most innovative tools (GLRU and gender champions) were directly relevant to the DFID DRC programming footprint. For future decisions, we should consider greater alignment of approach with DFID footprint which is geographically concentrated outside Kinshasa, the capital.

C: DETAILED OUTPUT SCORING

Output 1	<i>Relevant and robust knowledge generated and disseminated on the situation of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in Kinshasa and approaches and strategies for their economic empowerment.</i>		
Output number per LF	1	Output Score	A
Risk:	Moderate	Impact weighting (%):	40
Risk revised since last AR?	Y	Impact weighting % revised since last AR?	Y

Indicator(s)	Milestones	Progress
1.1 New evidence synthesised, generated and disseminated on the situation and perceptions of AGYW in Kinshasa and their economic empowerment	One further in-depth study completed and disseminated based on gaps identified in situation analysis; final evidence paper produced. Mechanisms established for regular dissemination of research and analysis.	<u>Met expectations</u> In-depth study completed in September 2017. Final evidence paper finalised in November 2017, validated with key stakeholders in October and disseminated at a close out event in December. Dissemination mechanisms were well established within the programme team and with local stakeholders.
1.2 Evidence and learning generated on potential new programming approaches and /or innovations to economic empowerment of AGYW in Kinshasa.	Mini-pilots evaluated, learning synthesised and exit strategies in place.	<u>Met expectations</u> Three mini-pilots completed supporting 1,150 participants between January – July 2017. Final synthesis report synthesising learning submitted to DFID in October. Additional longitudinal study completed in October 2017. Partners remain active in the field.
1.3 Development, use and publication of a new tool to measure economic empowerment of AGYW	Endline data collected on the Adolescent Economic Empowerment Index (A-EEI) for a sample of AGYW mini-pilot beneficiaries. Tool then refined and shared.	<u>Met expectations</u> A-EEI developed and used to measure mini-pilot outcomes. Briefing note disseminated at 3 events and discussions held with other DFID programmes. Online tutorial produced ⁷

Key Points

- Over the course of the programme La Pépinière has produced a wide range of novel research that expands understanding of the economic and social empowerment of AGYW in DRC, with broader applicability to other low and middle income country contexts. In total, 9 reports were produced, that summarise qualitative and quantitative research conducted during the programme life cycle, including one summary evidence paper. Dissemination has been well targeted at key stakeholders and feedback on the quality and relevance of outputs has generally been positive.
- Alongside observational research, SDDirect conducted operational research to test the effectiveness of discrete interventions through mini-pilots. During the programme three mini-pilots were completed, which reached 1,150 girls. Despite initial delays to the implementation of the mini-pilots and the termination of two originally-planned projects, all three completed projects demonstrated positive

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3A69lgEn270&feature=youtu.be>
<http://www.sddirect.org.uk/our-work/projects/dfid-la-p%C3%A9pini%C3%A8re-drc-s-programme-for-adolescent-girls/> .

changes for participants. The capacity of implementing partners also presented challenges, but despite this, the operational and M&E competencies of all three partners were greatly strengthened through their involvement in the project.

- A new “Adapted – Economic Empowerment index” (A-EEI) was developed as a summative framework to measure AGYW economic empowerment. The framework was applied to a sample of 200 girls who took part in the mini-pilots. Although this was not a representative sample, meaning results need to be treated with caution, the pilots led to aggregate improvements amongst participants across the majority of the 12 indicators within the index. Participants in the UMOJA pilot appear to have experienced the biggest increase overall (albeit this may be explained by the age and/ or location of the sample: respondents were not randomly selected). Some of the most positive changes relate to financial management and control over savings.

Summary of responses to issues raised in previous annual reviews (where relevant)

- Continue to ensure high quality implementation and learning from the mini-pilot implementation (deliver high quality end of programme learning documents, including evaluation of the mini-pilots). Although very challenging, the mini-pilots have been implemented with close follow up from La Pépinière to ensure quality implementation and risk mitigation. Research evaluating the projects was disseminated widely through stakeholder workshops in the DRC.
- Review La Pépinière Communications Strategy and the Influencing Paper to identify opportunities to allow the remaining time on the programme to be best used to disseminate the research generated so far (as per overall). The dissemination process was strengthened to become more inclusive of GLRUs and Gender Champions. Outreach activities in universities drew a lot of interests from students.
- Share work on Economic Empowerment Index with local, HQ and international stakeholders to develop the tool and test relevance for others. The work was shared in London and Kinshasa. Exchanges took place with the young women economic empowerment (MUVA) programme in DFID Mozambique which is keen to adopt a similar approach to make the best use of their data.

Recommendations for future programmes

- The Economic Empowerment Index and Theory of Change both provide a useful conceptual framework for other DFID programmes operating in this area to incorporate into programme design, logframes or evaluation plans. This should be shared across DFID.
- The impressive results of the UMOJA pilot demonstrate the catalytic role that a savings account can have on notions of financial independence and the willingness of AGYW to make small investments to boost income generation. However, poverty shocks can have a severe impact on savings plans and DFID should place greater consideration in the future on the role of cash transfers or other micro-lending instruments to ensure that female entrepreneurs have capital to invest when their businesses reach an appropriate stage of development.
- There is a strong case to build on the research generated by La Pépinière by investing further in interventions that seek to boost income generation prospects of AGYW. However, the global evidence base in this area remains weak and any approach should be heavily evaluated to look at the cost effectiveness of approaches that aim to build AGYW’s life skills, technical income generation skills and access to finance.
- The research findings highlight the importance of DFID investing in AGYW through other programmatic areas. Of particular importance here are family planning interventions, sexual and reproductive health and access to a decent education (which may require conditional cash transfers).

Output Title	<i>Sustainable local capacity and expertise built in DRC to engage in research, policy and programming on adolescent girls and young women (AGYW)</i>		
Output number per LF	2	Output Score	A
Risk:	Moderate	Impact weighting (%):	30%
Risk revised since last AR?	N	Impact weighting % revised since last AR?	N

Indicator(s)	Milestones	Progress
2.1 Key partners, government agencies and civil society (INGOs and local NGOs) working in Kinshasa (primarily) have improved capacity and skills to effectively design and implement policies and programmes for women and girls, especially AGYW	80% of gender champions report and demonstrate that they applied skills and knowledge gained through La Pep;	Met expectations 100% of gender champions who completed survey reported using the knowledge and skills gained. However, only 69% reported promoting dialogue around the needs of AGYW and participation. A further 30% of champions reported supporting organisations to develop child protection policies.
2.2 DFID programmes in Kinshasa and (and where relevant in wider DRC) have improved capacity and skills to effectively design and implement policies and programmes for women and girls, especially AGYW	6 existing or new DFID programmes supported to improve the quality of gender outcomes	Met expectations 6 technical assignments completed with an, average score of 4 (out of total possible score of 5), in following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFM: score 3 • Humanitarian: score 5 • Health: score 5 (assumption based on overall email from gender lead) • Education: score 3 • Market systems: score 5 • Gender training (internal DFID capacity): score 3
2.3 AGYW in DRC meaningfully participate in the design, implementation, analysis and dissemination of the research and evidence generation through the GLRU	Girl researchers have led or co-led at least one further research study (design, implementation, analysis and dissemination) and are satisfied with their participation	Exceeded expectations 15 trained girl researchers contributed to four research studies. Despite challenges, the girl researchers reported developing their skills and being exposed to new opportunities to develop their knowledge and experience.

Key Points

- The programme helped establish a Gender Champions' network with 20 members, at least 50% of whom were actively involved in supporting capacity building activities. They came from civil society, politics and the private sector. The model was intended to test means to build local expertise and momentum to influence broader policy and programming on AGYW. Despite this, the role of the gender champions was poorly defined at the outset and initially took time to establish, limiting the influence of their role. However, the gender champions are now a valuable asset in terms of the relationships it affords HMG with leaders on gender equality in the DRC. The community of practice had more mixed results. In 2017, 15 meetings of a community of practice took place, with between 15-60 people attending each event. Overall, although communities of practice did not prove as effective an instrument as hoped for coordinating and influencing stakeholders, they were useful conducts to disseminate evidence and initiate transformational change within communities. For the former, a more strategic approach should help map and target key decision makers from the start.
- The programme established a "responsive draw down mechanism" to contribute to the overarching objective of 'improved gender outcomes for DFID DRC existing programmes'. Six technical

assignments were completed, and generally well received, although with a mix in the performance ratings of individual assignments. The most successful assignment was the support provided to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), which was strategic (influenced the three year HRP) and highly rated by the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) and implementing partners. In addition, La Pépinière worked collaboratively with ELAN, the DFID Private Sector Development programme which resulted in co-designs of the mini-pilots and joint work on ELAN's approach to measure women's economic empowerment. Gender strategies and frameworks were developed for DFID's education and health programmes. However, the focus of the Girls Led Research Unit (GLRU) on Kinshasa and its lack of specialisation and geographical relevance to the DFID DRC footprint limited progress, as did the lack of management buy-in from some of the programmes receiving advice.

- The innovative GLRU mechanism has provided substantial learning on participatory approaches to research, monitoring, capacity building and dissemination of behaviour change messages. The researchers were supported by four mentors. The GLRU became involved in the governance of the programme, including the selection on interventions delivered through the mini-pilots. As La Pépinière closes, the GLRU constitutes a valuable resource for interested donors and national stakeholders who want to expand their work in the field of gender equality. They are now engaged with UNWomen and in USAID funded youth sexual and reproductive health research.

The Girls-led Research Unit (GLRU)

The dynamic GLRU is a group of 15 adolescent girls and young women from a range of socio-economic backgrounds in Kinshasa. Some are micro-entrepreneurs whereas others have just started or completed university. Some are mothers. Some have had limited opportunities whereas others have middle class and more privileged backgrounds. The GLRU received training and sustained mentoring support throughout the programme. They led a number of the research studies on the lives of AGYW in Kinshasa as peer researchers. Throughout the programme, the GLRU played a vital role in shaping and designing the programme's implementation strategy. They were ambassadors and advocates of the issues that their research uncovered, delivering key messages to donors, the government, local civil society, their communities and other young people through outreach events to disseminate the learning. They continue to advocate for a strong voice of adolescent girls and young women in the DRC.

Peer-to-peer learning beyond DRC: In November 2017, DFID Mozambique's young women economic empowerment programme (Muva) invited some of the GLRU to Maputo. This was to build peer-to-peer learning between La Pepiniere and Muva, and to disseminate the La Peiniere research at an international conference. Working together the young women quickly found a solution to the language barrier: an app for simultaneous translation. They worked together on research methodologies and shared the findings of their respective research. The GLRU presented their findings at a conference on young women's economic empowerment in Southern Africa. They used pictures to explain the context, barriers, and opportunities for youth empowerment in Kinshasa. A member of the Muva team said: "La Pepiniere's research products have helped me understand the challenges of youth in urban contexts. Of course, Kinshasa is unique, but many patterns are common to other cities in Africa and we can learn a lot from each other."

Summary of responses to issues raised in previous annual reviews (where relevant)

- Re-focus Gender Champions network, Community of Practice on influencing policies/programmes to deliver better results for AGYW. The Gender Champion action plan was re-focused on influencing policies/programmes.
- Use one remaining draw-down responsive mechanism assignment to support capacity of DFID DRC gender champions or other relevant staff. Make sure there is upstream engagement between DFID/La Pépinière to make assignments high impact. The level of ambition of this assignment had to be reviewed downwards for reasons outside the control of the programme (prolonged sick absence of the key DFID staff member leading the assignment).
- Consider options to work with GLRU on a programme or policy outside La Pépinière, to bring girls perspective to other stakeholders' work and demonstrate value of the model. Finalise the sustainability plan for the GLRU. Linkages with other programmes were facilitated by La Pépinière, including Save the Children/Passages, World Bank/Youth Employment programme, Handicap International, UNWomen and International Labour Organisation. A GLRU led-sustainability plan was finalised.

Recommendations for future programmes

- Despite high levels of demand amongst AGYW, within communities, across the network of gender champions and amongst NGOs for further girls led research, the sustainability of the GLRU remains

an ongoing issue. DFID should continue to ensure technical support to ensure that the GLRU is well placed to develop a permanent organisational structure.

- Despite initial delays La Pépinière helped to develop an active network of gender champions who remain passionate advocates for advancing the rights of AGYW. This can be drawn upon if any consultations take place for a new gender focused programme in DRC, and for any sectoral integration of gender.
- The responsive drawdown mechanism provided the DFID office with a constructive mechanism for both engaging young people in DFID's work and improving the gender responsiveness of core programmes. DFID DRC should consider opportunities to build on this model in future youth engagement and gender mainstreaming through a component of a future programme.

Output Title	<i>Strategic communications effectively communicates evidence and learning on adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) to key strategic partners in Kinshasa and more widely in DRC (including DFID, other donors, GoDRC, NGOs)</i>		
Output number per LF	3	Output Score	A
Risk:	Moderate	Impact weighting (%):	30%
Risk revised since last AR?	N	Impact weighting % revised since last AR?	N

Indicator(s)	Milestones	Progress
Level of satisfaction of targeted stakeholders with the quality (content, relevance, applicability etc.) of La Pépinière research and evidence communications products	Targeted stakeholders give a satisfaction rating of 4 or above (scale 1-5) for four out of six research comms products (NB cumulative total of 6 products delivered).	<u>Partially met expectations</u> Of the 22 respondents that rated the quality and relevance of the research, the average satisfaction rating was 3.4.
Physical and virtual platform/hub established as effective mechanism and community of practice for sharing knowledge and learning	80% of physical hub users give the hub a satisfaction rating of 4 or above (scale 1-5). Average visitor numbers of 100 per month to physical hub. Virtual hub receiving average of 150 hits per month. Virtual hub hosting materials from at least 10 other AGYW stakeholders in DRC, as well as La Pepiniere learning materials.	<u>Met expectations⁸</u> Satisfaction ratings were not collected as intended. The sub-set collected shows a 100% satisfaction rate. Average of 375 visitors to the physical hub each month. Virtual hub Facebook page receiving 2310 hits per month. Twitter page receiving 9723 hits per month. 15 organisations hosted materials on La Pepiniere's virtual hub
Outreach activities focused on La Pépinière learning	16 outreach activities (4 modules across 4 sites) delivered, reaching a minimum of 1280 people.	<u>Exceeded expectations</u> 23 outreach activities have taken place from July 2016 to November 2017. More than 1870 people were reached through events.

Key Points

- Substantial demand has been created for La Pépinière research through the GLRU and they are seen within DRC as providers of high quality qualitative research. Overall feedback is positive, but the unit did require substantial technical support for them to continue to build their capacity while delivering quality work.

⁸ It could be argued that this exceeded expectations, but we recognise that targets were not very ambitious and agreed to raise targets in this area. "Met expectations" reflects this expectation.

- The withdrawal of M&C Saatchi from the Consortium had an impact on the delivery of an innovative communication strategy. SDDirect used a combination of international experts and the recruitment of a local Communications Manager in November 2016 to make sure this output remained on track. However, milestone delivery experienced challenges which are not fully reflected in the targets. For example, despite being launched in June 2016, the virtual hub was not fully operational until early 2017. However, the programme made good progress on stakeholder engagement once it was established, and exceeded its expected reach, both physically and virtually.
- On community engagement the establishment of outreach events helped to ensure the involvement of key community actors, including community based organisations, parents, boys, and girls participating in the mini-pilots. Outreach events were held for each piece of research at key stages to provide feedback and discuss key findings, which were facilitated by girl researchers, mentors and gender champions. Key messages were delivered by girls belonging to the local communities and communities were actually seeing the changes that the girls were experiencing. Universities were also well targeted, which helped to raise the appetite for further discussion on gender and peer-led research.

Summary of responses to issues raised in previous annual reviews (where relevant)

- Revise logframe targets measuring use of hubs – the DFID team decided not to take this forward as there were more urgent priorities to focus on in the last six months of the programme.
- Review La Pépinière 's communications and influencing strategies to ensure resources are targeted in high impact areas (same as overall) - Given interest and participation, the team has focused on outreach activities, while maintaining high engagement through social media.
- SDDirect to develop a sustainability plan for the virtual and physical hub - The virtual hub has been handed over to the GLRU.

Recommendations for future programmes

- There is substantial demand for the evidence products produced, some of which are only available in French. Consideration should be given to translate written products into both English and Lingala, but also to ensure the data is openly accessible for researchers to continue to publish from this evidence base in the future.
- The global evidence base on the effectiveness of peer to peer education to enhance the knowledge of young people in areas such as sexual health is mixed. However, La Pepiniere has demonstrated that when peer educators (i.e. the girl researchers) have a good technical understanding of the issues in their area (i.e. girls empowerment) then they can play a powerful role in advancing awareness amongst their peers and the wider community.
- Community sensitisation needs to be considered from the outset of programmes engaging AGYW. This should include household level discussions, community leaders, men and boys and other community gatekeepers. Local actors were initially confused about the work of La Pépinière which was easily clarified through engagement activities.

Key cost drivers and performance

The major cost driver of the project was staff fees, representing 54% of implementation costs. This weighting on fees is typical for a project that focuses largely on the delivery of technical assistance, research and training. Banded fee rates were agreed with DFID at the start of the implementation phase to ensure expert costs were aligned with experience and benchmarked against market rates. In addition, during delivery, costs were tracked against components in a detailed activities based budget tracker.

	Management	Learning	Capacity Building	Communication	Mini-Pilots	Total
Fees	305,475	458,108	386,119	46,393	68,442	1,264,537
Expenses	389,057	177,231	31,545	18,488	459,203	1,075,524
Total	694,532	635,339	417,664	64,881	527,645	2,340,061
%	29.7%	27.2%	17.8%	2.8%	22.5%	

VfM performance compared to the original VfM proposition in the business case

Given this was a research based programme, it was anticipated in the business case that there would be a high ratio of fees to implementation costs. This has proved correct. However, several steps were taken over the programme cycle to maximise its **economy** within these limitations:

- The programme used an 'expert pool' of senior mid-level consultants to recruit specialist short-term, time-bound consultants for the delivery of specific activities instead of recruiting full-time staff. This was flexible, innovative, and allowed DFID to request a range of expertise from SDDirect for short amounts of time without paying for 100% of staffing costs.
- Working with established organisations to test the mini-pilots generated considerable savings in terms of the structural costs required for the full design, M&E and implementation of development programmes. Despite ongoing challenges around organisational capacity, the mini-pilot partners were able to use their existing offices, VfM protocols and current staff to deliver activities, saving on expensive start-up and recruitment costs.

DFID and SDDirect made two key changes over the duration of the programme cycle to improve **efficiency** of La Pépinière and allow the programme to reach more girls without increasing costs. Firstly, the decision to transition from a research to an operational programme has meant that through the Mini Pilots, the programme was able to leverage the benefits of existing activities in order to enhance their own effectiveness and impact. La Pépinière benefitted from SFCG's extensive experience in mass media and youth in developing a social media approach and extending it through the use of TV; from Umoja's experience of supporting young women's entrepreneurship; and from SJS' experience of building social capital of adolescent girls to develop effective approaches to empower AGYW.

Secondly, as a result of the no-cost extension agreed between DFID and SDDirect in Feb 2017, a greater part of the fees and expenses compensation was tied to the timely achievement of targets, through the introduction of performance-based milestones. This increased efficiency by giving SDDirect more stringent criteria for delivery, and penalties for missing deadlines. As a result, all milestones were delivered to a high quality and overall in a timely manner.

Changes to the programme through the no cost extension by SDDirect and DFID strengthened value for money of the programme by reallocating funds to maximise benefits and increase programme **effectiveness**. The small size of partners delivering mini pilots meant that absorbency was lower than expected during delivery. SDDirect re-invested more time in building partner capacity and reallocated funds to other programme components. This created a longer term sustainable approach, increased the visibility of programme activities and maximised effectiveness of core interventions. Similarly, the no cost extension re-directed funds towards M&E of the mini pilots. Lastly, the no cost extension made changes to the operational set up of La Pépinière. By giving flexibility on mini pilot end dates it reduced the risk of cutting of activities before they reached their full potential, both with regards to benefits for participants, reaching targets and as learning for DFID DRD.

The programme delivered against **equity considerations**, as it targeted hard to reach beneficiaries, in this case adolescent girls and young women, who are typically marginalised and discriminated against in the DRC. From a life cycle approach, they are often already too old to be reached through education services (or have never been to school) or health services generally targeted at children under 5. But they are often still too young to be captured by services targeted at mothers – for example antenatal care. This makes them harder to reach and requires more investments into beneficiary identification and M&E. One of the lessons from La Pepiniere is for a future programme to have a greater focus on integrating adolescent boys and young men to support transformative change on gender equality.

Assessment of whether the programme represented value for money

There is good evidence that the programme has acted as a VfM model for generating high quality, relevant research and assessing the effectiveness of different interventions to empower AGYW. Research from the programme has already been used by a range of key stakeholders, like local civil society organisations, international NGOs and international organisations, which suggests that the programme will have impact beyond its lifetime. Value for money will also depend on what comes next. The real opportunity will be the uptake of research amongst key stakeholders and its integration in future gender, education, family planning and economic development programmes and policy.

Quality of financial management during programme

Over the course of the contract SDDirect provided timely forecasts and detailed invoices on a monthly basis. During implementation phase we also managed disbursements to three mini-pilot partners as well as their consortium partners with strong financial management controls in place. A comprehensive financial management tool to track fees and expenses by activity was developed during the implementation phase. This tool allowed the team to more accurately forecast monthly expenditure of the programme on an activities basis.

Several amendments to the financial structure of the SDDirect contract were required over the course of the final year to ensure that SDDirect had adequate liquidity to fund the mini-pilots, and that they were not inadvertently penalised or given inappropriate incentives. The process of negotiating these changes has brought useful lessons for the DFID team when structuring contracts, particularly for innovative, untested initiatives such as the mini-pilots. While important for driving delivery, the large number of milestones and complex forecasting model has added an administrative burden to both teams.

The original model sought to incentivise SDDirect to drive forward the mini-pilots, and linked disbursement of mini-pilot funds to SDDirect compensation milestones. DFID ensured SDDirect were not paid in advance of need and focused on results. However, there were severe delays to the implementation of the mini-pilots, not all of which were within SDDirect control, for example DFID HQ’s decision not to move forward with one of the partners identified. These delays caused SDDirect to run a large shortfall against fees and expenses incurred, incentivising them to release funds quickly and in as large tranches as possible. Therefore, it was agreed that the disbursements would be de-coupled from SDDirect compensation, and invoiced as needed up to the ceiling agreed. To retain the original structure of the contract, (50% fees and expenses, 50% performance-based milestones), the remaining milestones were increased proportionally. This change allowed the SDDirect team to implement a more flexible, responsive and risk-adjusted management of mini-pilot finances, disbursing smaller amounts according to need. No payments in advance of need were made.

Date of last narrative financial report	20/12/17
Date of last audited annual statement	Latest accounts submitted in March 2018

E. RISK

Quality of risk management over the life of the programme:

The overall risk rating for this programme was moderate. At the beginning of the programme, risk was judged “high”, because its innovative approach had not been tested in the DRC. In 2015, risk was judged “medium”, and subsequently “moderate” in 2016 and 2017. SDDirect maintained a detailed risk register which was shared with DFID every month, and discussed through monthly narrative reports. This

included information on the root causes of risks, the primary consequences, mitigating processes and residual risk. This was used to inform DFID's high level risk register which was updated quarterly and measured risks across six categories (delivery, fiduciary, safeguarding, operational, external context and reputational) in line with DFID's Smart Rules. The programme continued to adapt, learn and revise its approach to risk management to mitigate key risks identified in the design stage. These included:

- **Safeguarding.** SDDirect conducted an important work stream on safeguarding, which was identified as a key risk area given the programme worked with AGYW. SDDirect proactively worked with beneficiaries, parents, communities and downstream partners to ensure that all staff were well prepared to safeguard against, and respond to cases of child protection and that all people, particularly AGYW were aware of their rights. This included a review and adaptation of La Pépinière Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. La Pépinière also conducted training and capacity building for local CSOs to improve their child and vulnerable adult protection strategies, documented in La Pépinière's Case Study on "Strengthening protection practices for adolescent girls and young women". Given the current context, it will be important for DFID and SDDirect to consolidate lessons learned on safeguarding and share them across the organisation.
- **Delivery.** Downstream partner capacity was identified as a key risk in the design phase of the Mini-Pilots, and civil society as a whole tends to be weak across DRC. Partners were chosen due to their experience working with adolescent girls and young women, their embedded nature in the community, and their ability to react quickly. Through the course of the programme SDDirect made a lot of effort to build the capacity and management operations of downstream partners. They conducted thorough due diligence assessments, evaluations and audits, and recruited a full time Mini Pilots Manager to provide 1-1 technical guidance, and close monitoring to each of the Mini Pilots. Despite this several partners struggled with financial management which led to delayed disbursements, and delays in implementation. This has demonstrated a need to embed capacity building of local organisations in our development programming.
- **Operational:** The programme experienced a number of operational challenges, including the unforeseen early termination of two mini-pilots, and core team positions impacted by unplanned absences and the difficulties of national and international recruitment. The gap between La Pépinière and a potential future programme by DFID DRC on AGYW meant that staff turnover was high from October to December 2017. DFID held bi-weekly meetings with the programme lead in DRC to ensure that all activities agreed under the work plan were implemented. Any disruptions to work-plan deadlines and activities were communicated in advance to DFID DRC to ensure that there was a coordinated plan in place for revising timelines if necessary. This raised the importance of the need to build in sustainability approaches to programmes from design phase.
- **External Context: insecure and unpredictable operating environment.** The security situation in Kinshasa remains a major risk due to the ongoing political crisis. Several times project activities were suspended due to the threat of civil unrest, including prolonged periods of violence and instability in September and December 2016. Hardship increased due to the economic crisis, and realisation of sexual and reproductive health rights remained a challenge for young women. Despite these external challenges, retention rates for participants in the GLRU and mini-pilots were surprisingly high.
- **External Context: challenging norms around gender.** DRC continues to be one of the worst places in the world to be born a girl. It's one of the lowest ranking countries on the global gender inequality index (ranking 153 out of 159 countries). In DRC entrenched gender norms dictate that girls and women are inferior to boys and men and should be "submissive" and "obedient". These gender norms limited the space girls had to engage, but were ultimately what the programme sought to address and challenge with its approaches. Anecdotal evidence from participants provides examples of where attitudes of parents started to shift, for example a father now expecting their boy and girl children to share household tasks.

F: COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Delivery against planned timeframe

La Pépinière was approved in 2013 but only moved out of the inception phase and into implementation in 2016. Delays were due to mobilisation and initial procurement issues, with SDDirect only contracted in 2015. Whilst the quality of outputs was high throughout implementation, targets initially took longer to meet than anticipated due to critical staffing gaps. In the final year timeliness of delivery improved significantly, which helped the programme to achieve strong results in a short period of time. Other factors that drove the delay have been outside the programme's control, such as the political instability that led to frequent protests and general strikes. This created major operational barriers for programme activities across the capital, particularly given the risk profile of the target groups (young women, often with very young children). SDDirect worked flexibly to manage this risk to delivery.

Performance of Partnerships

A consortium was chosen to lead the programme. M&C Saatchi left the consortium at the beginning of programme implementation. A revised relationship was established with a local partner Centre Régional de Recherche et de Documentation sur les Femmes, le Genre et la Construction de la Paix dans la région des Grands Lacs (CERED-GL). SDDirect managed the Consortium through a three-tier programme governance system, comprising a quarterly Steering Committee, a monthly Programme Board, and a weekly Programme Management Group. At a later stage in the programme, a Programme Advisory and Coordination Taskforce (PACT)⁹ was established. PACT provided a bi-monthly forum for multi-stakeholder discussion of issues such as culture and values; coordination of programme partners; risk oversight; sustainable progress delivery; adaptive programme management; technical guidance to the Programme Management Group; and coordination for learning and influence.

Asset disposal and value obtained by DFID

DFID conducted the asset disposal in December 2017. La Pépinière currently held 142 assets by programme end. In order to maximise Value for Money, DFID's preferred option was for assets to be transferred to other DFID DRC programmes and to be auctioned – the estimated value of these assets is approximately £7000. Remaining smaller assets were transferred to local down-stream partners of the programme. This will help create a sustainable movement and allow downstream partners to continue to improve the lives of AGYW. All assets will be put to good developmental purpose.

G: CONDITIONALITY

Partnership principles assessment

N/A. La Pépinière was a research and capacity building programme delivered through the private sector and NGOs. Some engagement took place with government organisations such as the Ministry of Gender. No funding was allocated to, or flowed through, government organisations.

H: MONITORING & EVALUATION

Evidence and evaluation

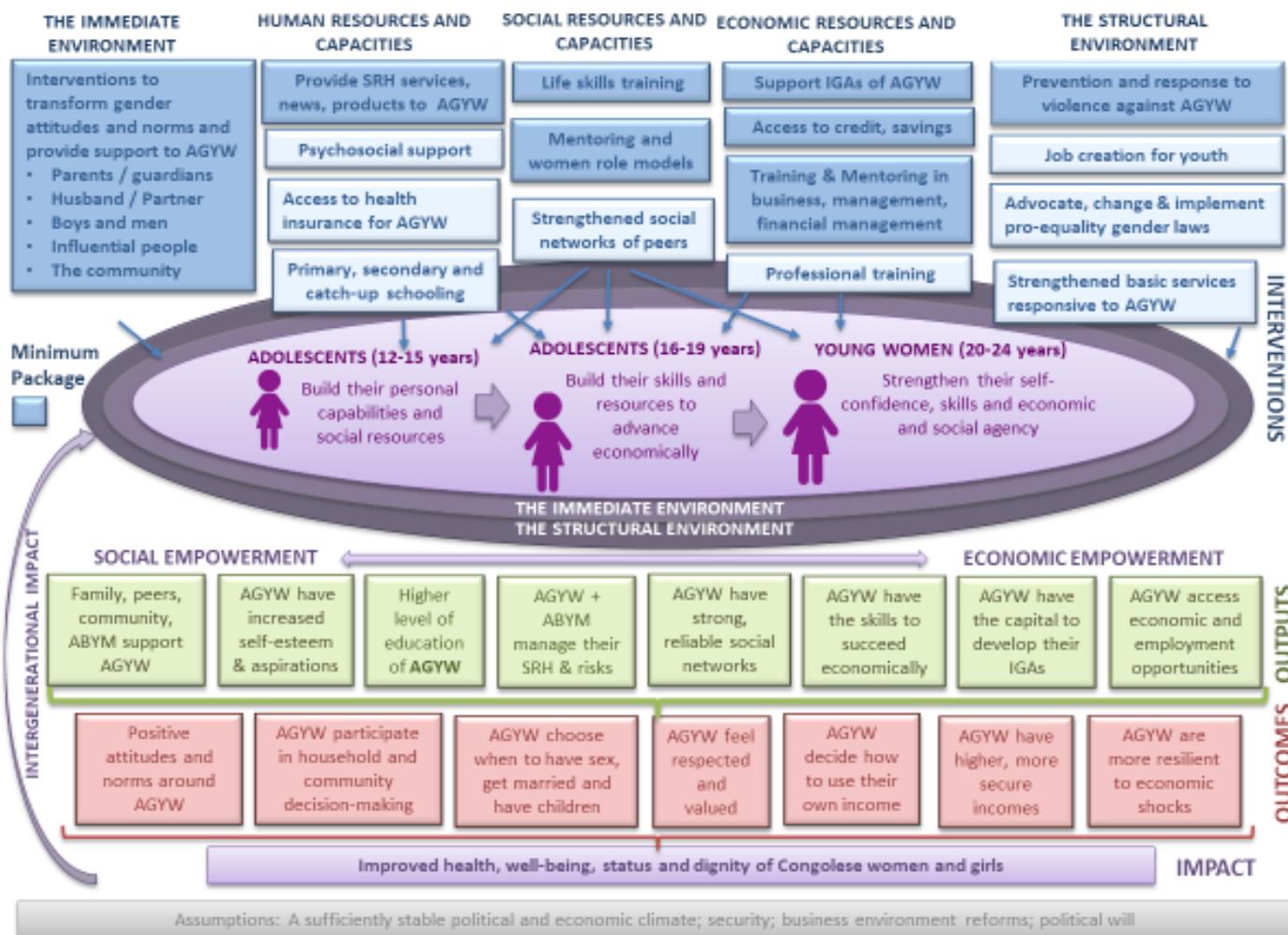
As expected with a learning and capacity building programme, La Pépinière took a strong approach to evidence generation, drawing on local research collected and the global evidence base to produce a robust Theory of Change and a wide range of supportive products and tools. Particular highlights that will be useful for future DFID programming include:

- The development of the Adolescent Economic Empowerment -Index, which could serve as a useful measurement tool for tracking the progress of AGYW empowerment in other DFID programmes.
- The Theory of Change for the empowerment of adolescent girls, which combines economic and social dimensions. It moves beyond economic empowerment. The narrative which accompanies the theory of change summarises international and local evidence gathered to date (see Fig 2 below).

⁹ Composed of representatives from the GLRU, gender champions, CERED, implementing partners, GoDRC, DFID and SDDirect, and chaired by the SDDirect Team Leader.

- The final evidence synthesis paper, which provides a summary of the evidence generated and reviewed.
- The GLRU M&E model serves as a useful reminder of the unique role of youth-led development in accessing the insights and perceptions of other young people.
- Summative evidence on what works from the mini-pilots, demonstrating the importance of mobile bank accounts in contributing to notions of financial independence.

Fig. 2: A theory of Change for AGYW in the DRC



Monitoring progress throughout the programme

The overall monitoring of La Pépinière programme has been led by the overarching logframe, covering the three different components of the programme and enabling a review of progress across the programme life cycle, from baseline data through to end of programme targets. Beneath this framework progress was reviewed using a number of processes:

- The DFID SRO met bi-weekly with La Pépinière Team leader to follow progress closely, highlighting and managing risks as well as discussing progress.
- The Management Committee met quarterly to discuss broader programme progress and risks.
- The PACT provided oversight and helped support programme delivery. It was introduced during the final year and met every 2 months and involved consortium internal stakeholders, government, beneficiaries and other key stakeholders.
- The programme's location in Kinshasa allowed DFID staff to regularly attend La Pépinière activities and events, and facilitates exchanges with the stakeholders and down-stream partners.
- Annual Reviews were conducted by the DFID DRC La Pepiniere team, based on programme documentation and discussions with key stakeholders, implementing partners, downstream partners and programme beneficiaries such as the GLRU. The PCR was conducted with support from DFID HQ SDA with experience working on DFID youth and education.