SAVING FOR CHANGE
MOBILE BANKING SENEGAL
LEARNING REVIEW REPORT

Author(s): Sala H. Dia & Marius Chabi.

Affiliation/Title: Sala H. Dia (Information and MEL Program Officer | Oxfam - Dakar, Senegal)
& Marius Chabi (Regional MEL assistant in West Africa – Oxfam)

Date:
Collection of data: September 2015.
Final report: November 2015
As part of our commitment to accountability and learning, Oxfam will share conclusions and recommendations from evaluations. Internally we will share with relevant stakeholders, ensuring that they have an opportunity to participate in discussion of those results in meaningful ways. We will also publish the evaluation reports on our website in accessible language.

As a rights-based organization, accountability, particularly to the communities we seek to serve, is of the highest importance to us. For Oxfam, accountability requires Oxfam to regularly and honestly assess the quality of its work, share and learn from its findings with primary stakeholders, and apply that learning in future work.

This is an evaluation of Oxfam America’s SFC Mobile banking pilot in Senegal. The Saving for Change program first began in Mali in 2005, and later that same year in Cambodia. In the last decade, SIC expanded to three more countries – Senegal, Guatemala, and El Salvador – and today reaches more than 730,000 members who have collectively saved $55 million since 2005. This evaluation covers one of the innovative pilot projects of SIC in Senegal SFC + Mobile Banking. The evaluation covers the work undertaken between 2014 and 2015.

The major evaluation activities took place between August and September 2015. The evaluation was carried out by Oxfam’s MEL advisors in West Africa, as an internal learning review of the pilot project and reflects the findings as reported by him/her/them as validated with stakeholders. The evaluation was managed by Sala H. Dia (Information and MEL Program Officer | Oxfam - Dakar, Senegal) from Oxfam America, and commissioned by Sophie Romana, Director, community finance – Oxfam America.

For additional information regarding the evaluation Terms of Reference, please refer to the report appendices.
# CONTENTS

Preface................................................................................................................................. iii
List of Tables ......................................................................................................................... iv
List of Figures ......................................................................................................................... iv
Abbreviations and Acronyms .............................................................................................. v

Executive Summary ................................................................................................................. 06
Program/Project/Intervention Objective .............................................................................. 06
Objectives ............................................................................................................................... 07
Methodology ............................................................................................................................ 07
Summary of Findings/Conclusions ....................................................................................... 07
Main Recommendations ......................................................................................................... 08

Introduction and Overview .................................................................................................... 08
  Intervention Objectives, Brief Context
  Geographical Scope
  Evaluation Purpose, Audience and Use
  Primary Change Agent and Key Stakeholders
  Brief Description of Program’s Theory of Change

Evaluation Design .................................................................................................................. 13
Key Questions .......................................................................................................................... 13
Team ......................................................................................................................................... 13
Methodology ............................................................................................................................ 13
Limitations .............................................................................................................................. 14

Evaluation Findings ................................................................................................................ 15
The context and Major Trends. Include maps of the geographic area.
Partner Overview Program Funding History (brief table)
Lines of Work in Relation to Objectives – Work Conducted
Findings in accordance with Terms of Reference

Conclusions and Recommendations ....................................................................................... 24

References ............................................................................................................................... 28

Appendix 1 .............................................................................................................................. 29
According to the World Bank, more than 2.5 billion grown-ups worldwide lack access to formal accounts at financial institutions; three-quarters of the world’s poor fall into this category. Those living in rural areas are particularly disadvantaged. Financial institutions often do not serve these impoverished communities because of high transaction costs linked to a population that they don’t deem creditworthy.

In 2005, in response to this global challenge, Oxfam America teamed up with Freedom from Hunger and the Strømme Foundation to launch Saving for Change (SfC). This grassroots approach to poverty alleviation and economic empowerment first began in Mali, and later that same year in Cambodia. In the last decade, SfC expanded to three more countries – Senegal, Guatemala, and El Salvador – and today reaches more than 730,000 members who have collectively saved $55 million USD.

Savings groups (SGs) respond to the unmet needs of the rural poor by providing basic financial services in the form of a secure place to save regularly; the opportunity to borrow in small amounts and to share in the profit accumulated by the group at the end of a cycle. At the end of a saving cycle—generally a year—the fund is divided and each woman receives her savings plus a share of the profit made up of fines, interest paid on loans and revenues from income generating activities undertaken by the group.

SfC expanded quickly – and often organically – in its early years. SfC groups now had a foundational understanding of how to manage their money, but how could they leverage their funds to further reduce food insecurity in their communities and support income generating activities? Oxfam began to address this question in 2012 through a suite of new services, trainings, and products requested by members themselves called “SfC +”, including SfC + Agriculture, SfC + Business, SfC + Citizenship, SfC + Mobile, SfC + Health, and integration with R4.

SfC + Mobile was piloted in Senegal between 2014 - 2015. This program enables women to save and pay back loans directly on their cell phones instead of putting coins in the group savings box. This increases the safety of their savings and plugs them into a wider electronic payment system (mobile money, mobile transactions, and peer-to-peer transfers). This also increases their financial literacy and positions the more experienced and advanced groups to become clients of the formal banking sector.

This document is a learning review of the SfC pilot implemented in Senegal.
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 (Area of residence by treatment status).................................15
Table 2 (Age per treatment status)..................................................15
Table 3 (Possession of Mobile Banking Account per treatment status)...16
Table 4 (Total amount of XOF mobilized by the control and treatment)...17
Table 5 (Average amount saved in the mobile banking account).........17

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 (Control group's desire to have a MBA)..............................16
Figure 2 (Amount of loans in XOF for treatment and control groups)....17
Figure 3 (Use of mobile phones)....................................................18
Figure 4 (Knowledge and use of mobile banking)............................19
Figure 5 (Benefits of Mobile Banking)..........................................19
Figure 6 (Mastery of phone’s principal keys)..................................20
Figure 7 (Recognition of digits).....................................................20
Figure 8 (Mobile Banking Account handling).................................21
Figure 9 (Learning about mobile banking)......................................22
Figure 10 (Perception and appreciation of mobile banking)..............22
Figure 11 (Satisfaction with implementation of the project)..............22
Figure 12 (Diffusion of the training).............................................23
## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACEP</td>
<td>Alliance de Credit et d'Epargne pour la Production (Credit and Savings Alliance for Production)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGA</td>
<td>Income-generating activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFC</td>
<td>Saving for Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFI</td>
<td>Microfinance Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAMECAS</td>
<td>Partenariat pour la Mobilisation de l'Epargne et le Crédit au Sénégal (Partnership for Mobilizing Savings and Credit in Senegal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-IMCEC</td>
<td>Union des Institutions Mutualistes Communautaires d'Epargne et de Crédit (Community Mutual Institutions Union for Savings and Credit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBA</td>
<td>United Bank for Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW OF INTERVENTION (PROGRAMS, CAMPAIGN, OR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE)

Problem

Three-quarters of the world’s poorest populations do not have access to a formal bank account. The reasons behind this alarming statistic are varied, but one thing is clear: there is a significant gap in financial services available to the poor, leaving them with few viable options to save.

Response

In 2005, in response to this global challenge, Oxfam America teamed up with Freedom from Hunger and the Strømme Foundation to launch Saving for Change (SfC). This grassroots approach to poverty alleviation and economic empowerment first began in Mali, and later that same year in Cambodia. In the last decade, SfC expanded to three more countries – Senegal, Guatemala, and El Salvador – and today reaches more than 730,000 members who have collectively saved $55 million.

The basic methodology is simple, yet effective. SfC empowers groups of 20 to 25 members – typically women – to meet weekly and save small amounts of money in a metal lockbox, ranging from a few cents to a few dollars. With initial training provided by Oxfam and local partners, members learn to self-manage, collectively establishing group rules on savings, loans, fines, and repayment. When members meet, they also develop bonds of mutual assistance and solidarity, which builds social capital.

As groups increase their savings, the traditional box they use to store the cash becomes less and less secure. But moreover these funds are not captured by the formal banking system that has the potential both to secure them and give additional opportunities to rural women to access more funding to develop their business as they are involved in advance stages of SfC implementation.

One of the solutions explored to provide both, better safety to the groups’s funds and access to more credit, is mobile financial transactions. This is quite important when one knows that 1 out of 5 person have access to formal financial services in Senegal and the fact that the financial environment is improving thanks to the emergence of new technologies and new businesses, mainly mobile technology.

In Senegal, the SfC + Mobile pilot has been offered to groups considered “mature” (having already gone through at least one full year-long saving cycle) and that have already received SfC + Business training. Members of those groups have leveraged the business training and either increased the volume of their business or launched additional ventures. They require fast, secure, easy transactions in order to spend more time growing their business and less time going to the bank. The project offered them the opportunity to secure their funds and perform simple, efficient and affordable financial transactions that can to support the development of their economic activities.
Oxfam America received a grant from the CISCO Foundation to pilot this mobile transaction initiative for mature Saving for Change Groups in Senegal. After about a year of implementation there is a need to do a learning review to analyze the progress made and ways forwards.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

To assess and review progress, learn and identify areas for improvement and possibly the scaling of project.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach used for the learning review of the pilot phase of the project consists of a mix of methods: documentary review, quantitative information collected with the use of Mobenzi platform (mobile phone use in the data collection) and qualitative analysis based on semi-structured interviews. For the quantitative analysis the tool used was the difference in difference approach in order to be able to attribute the changes identified in people’s lives to the actions of the pilot.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS

As a pilot, the SfC mobile banking project registered successes. Its outcomes confirm the relevance of the approach and from the answers of the survey and the interviews it appears clearly that mobile banking is useful, much appreciated by participants and responds to a need. Most of the participant women made the step to open and use mobile banking account. This is one of the best illustrations of the great potential of such an initiative to boost rural microfinance.

**The project was deemed relevant by the great majority of the stakeholders.** The implementation of the project proved to respond to a real need of the groups that are mature and need to move forward. Women increased their savings during the period, compared to non-participants. The implementation process was participatory and included the active participation of fieldworkers and the primary change agents. **The project has been accepted by the women’s groups:** They now fully understand the process.

The Training (content, approach, tools) was highly appreciated and adapted to the target which is mostly illiterate: The important point is the novelty: the ability to master the key functions of the mobile phone, to read and dial a number is new for most of them and they were eager to learn. **The project has enabled SfC women to feel more autonomous:** Today they feel more autonomous. A woman from Kolda even said that they are six SfC group members in her home and only one knew how to use the mobile phone. Today, they all can pass call without assistance. Moreover they also can recognize the numeral digits.

**Women’s knowledge and use of mobile banking has been increased:** The fact to secure money and make transactions without traveling is highly appreciated. The majority of the women trained also know how to make transactions: deposit, withdrawal, and this has been demonstrated with the continuous deposit they are making through mobile banking even if the amount of the deposit is still low. In some groups the women even organized themselves to pay their bills together through mobile banking.
MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

The relationship of trust between the implementing partner and the communities was essential to facilitate the adoption of mobile banking and show commitment to the project. Consultation, partnership, participation, inclusion, transparency, and a good knowledge of the environment contributed to it. **Duration is a key factor of success** in such a project, regarding the target groups’ characteristics to master and continue to use mobile banking. It would have been advisable to have a longer span of time for the adoption of the new technology. A follow-up should be put in place to avoid any discouragement and sustain the gains of the project.

**Illiteracy is a constraint** to the mastery of all training content but the approach of the trainer and the use of visual tools facilitated the learning process for the women. **More time and resources** are needed to consolidate the learning of the **women** that are **illiterate** or with very low levels of education.

The **relationship** with the **mobile operator** has to be **win-win**. It must be highlighted that even if the groups are making deposits with the chosen operator “Orange Money”, they still keep most of their funds into their traditional saving box. This is due to the fact that with SfC traditional model they can save funds and the funds are remunerated thanks to the loans’ interests. But “Orange Money” just allows securing their funds and making some transactions at a cost. The transaction fee (deposit / withdrawal) is a big concern for them. Also keeping their saving in mobile account that does not generate interest is discouraging for them.

The problem of access to the SfC groups’ accounts has also been highlighted. The actual system does not allow to track the transaction made via orange money and this was one of the main needs of SfC: have tracking records so that the SfC can be considered in the rural microfinance system which will allow the groups to access credit via the MFIs or banks.

For the future it will be very useful to have a multi-operators option and set up an independent platform for SfC to track the transactions and have an overview of the savings. Financial actors consulted stated that they are ready to form alliances in their interest to gain more market.
INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW OF THE INTERVENTION (PROGRAMS, CAMPAIGN, HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE)

Overview of Intervention Goals

Objective: To look far into the future and design an agile platform onto which it will be possible to add further components, link up with more vendors, and ultimately promote cash-light or even a cash-less economic ecosystem.

Large portion of Senegal’s 13 million people is underserved by local banking institutions. Four out of five people work in the informal sector and two out of three are considered “low income”¹. Over 52% of the population lives in rural areas, and in poor, remote areas women are even more vulnerable.

Walking or taking the bus to perform basic saving, borrowing, and loan repayment is time consuming, costly, and occasionally dangerous. Sending money across the country to a relative involves entrusting a large portion of one’s savings to a bus or taxi driver. Mobile transactions can provide low cost, safe, easy and fast solutions. SFC’s 730,000 members around the world are all facing these exact predicaments, which are typical of economies relying on physical cash. Mobile transactions are part of the solution, and Oxfam will increase access to digital transactions where they bring value to women members.

The pilot project was rolled out in regions of Senegal where SFC groups not only already exist, but where they are particularly isolated in rural areas.

Purpose of the Evaluation

This learning review is primarily intended as a deliverable of the grant and also for Oxfam’s internal use, its partner’s and the communities involved in the pilot implementation, in order to assess and review progress, identify areas for improvement and possibly the scaling of project.

Intervention Context

Oxfam has been implementing the Saving for Change (SfC) program in Senegal since 2006, with a focus on vulnerable women in Tambacounda, Kolda and Kedougou. The objective of the program is to provide rural women with access to basic financial services. This strategy involves strengthening their management and literacy capacities through solidarity groups named “SfC Groups”.

As groups increase their savings, the traditional box they use to store the cash becomes less and less secure. But moreover these funds are not captured by the formal banking system that has the potential both to secure them and give additional opportunities to rural women to access more funding to develop their business as they are involved in advance stages of SfC implementation.

¹ Monthly revenues of 50,000 FCFA (approx. $100 USD) or less per household
One of the solutions explored to provide both, better safety to the groups’ funds and access to more credit, is mobile financial transactions. In 2015, part of the SFC program evolved with the introduction of ICT (mobile, online platform) for both, intervention’s implementation and evaluation. In particular, a comprehensive pilot project baptized “SfC + Mobile Banking” has been carried out with promising results and enthusiasm from participants and the implementing partner. The goal of SfC + Mobile was: 1) Increase the safety of savings for groups with high levels of cash and 2) provide faster, safer transactions.

The participants have been trained on the use of mobile money services, including identification phone digits, use of mobile phone, identification of bank notes’ digits, subscription to the mobile banking service, control of account balance, etc.

SFC member’s needs are evolving: there is a high cell phone penetration among those groups; women use multiple services such joni joni, wari, orange money, etc… without locking themselves in one contract; these women are usually very busy and being able to do their financial transactions on their phone is a huge timesaver. To respond to these and other priorities of women, the program intends to invest in areas such as the development of rural micro enterprises (individual and collective), improvement of access to markets and linkage to formal financial institutions. With that in mind, the use of ICT appears to be a fundamental strategy moving forward.

Key Stakeholders and Primary Change Agents

In Senegal, the SFC + Mobile pilot was offered to groups considered “mature” (having already gone through at least one full year-long saving cycle) and that have already received SFC + Business training. Members of those groups have leveraged the business training and either increased the volume of their business or launched additional ventures. They require fast, secure, easy transactions in order to spend more time growing their business and less time going to the bank.

This pilot also included groups of participants from Oxfam’s R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, through which smallholder farmers work on community resilience projects to pay for crop insurance premiums, while simultaneously engaging in saving and credit activities to cushion against shocks and help invest in productive inputs. These groups are created from SFC + Business groups, and need to have access to adequate solutions to pay their insurance premiums, receive their payouts, and receive loan disbursements from the warrantage credit system that we have recently put in place in Senegal. In this system, harvests are securely stored in village “cereal banks” until the market reaches a price maturity allowing farmers to sell at a higher price. During its storage, the harvest serves as collateral for 6-month loans.

As shown in the map below, participants in this mobile pilot will be drawn from the regions of Tambacounda, Kolda, and Kedougou.
Brief Description of Program's Theory of Change

The pilot did not have a theory of change. In the following paragraphs there is a description of the rationality behind the implementation of the pilot:

Some groups’ savings may amount to millions of FCFA (1 million FCFA is about $2,000 USD). Keeping that much cash in a box is no longer safe, but few alternative solutions exist in the absence of brick-and-mortar retail banks and MFIs. For these women, time is precious, and the faster their transactions, the more time they will have to identify and capitalize on new business opportunities.

Saving for Change has a successful track record of supporting Oxfam’s mission to provide long lasting solutions to poverty. The most rigorous and recent evaluation of SFC has demonstrated a positive impact on food security of savings group members, an increase in savings and lending within the group, and an increase in investments in livestock. 82% of members live with less than $1.25 a day, confirming SFC’s outreach to the most vulnerable populations. We believe that all of these impacts, brought together with the natural consumption smoothing mechanism afforded by the savings group model, do increase the resilience of SFC members’ households.

But this is not enough: members, especially women, need to be able to better bounce back from shocks, but they also need to re-join growth trajectories. In the past four years, Oxfam has developed a suite of adapted trainings to innovate on the standard model of the savings group and increase the skills, competence, and self-confidence of women involved in SFC:

- SFC + Business: initiating or improving management of Income Generating Activities (“IGAs”)
- SFC + Agriculture: increasing yields through agroforestry practices
- SFC + Citizenship: better understanding the roles of local institutions, creating SFC associations, and encouraging participation in local elections

In this context, the next logical step was to link groups to mobile banking to enable faster, more secure transactions.

Saving for Change recipients live in an environment plagued by food insecurity and inadequate access to a formal banking system. Less than a quarter of the adult population (1.6 million people) has an account at a formal financial institution (bank, microfinance institution or post office). The services offered cannot serve a growing population of 13 million with 46.7% living under the national poverty line. A full 80% of the economy is informal, creating a host of problems to access formal banking services. We believe that using technology that is already available, and can be adapted to the needs of SFC members, local partners and the communities, with whom we work, is a cost-effective means to increase financial inclusion.

Traditional access to “brick-and-mortar” banking agencies is not a development we foresee in the near future. Therefore, we cannot count on the development of an adapted retail banking network to increase rural populations’ access to financial services.

Senegal is a growing market that already has an excellent network covering most of the country, a high penetration rate, and a dynamic population of users who are looking for more services to save time, complete more transactions, and increase their business by using their phones. Furthermore, Oxfam has elected to leverage the existing SFC groups there to create and test a mobile banking service for savings groups.

Traditionally, MNOs focus their offerings of products and services on individuals and their families. Group dynamics, needs, and particular social constraints, require a tailored platform that will enable both individuals and groups to switch to digital transactions. Introducing new services and products (especially cashless ones) in a group setting requires adequate training and ongoing support. In this context, training not only the field agents who rolled out the pilot but the members of SFC groups themselves is a key success factor. In the past nine years, Oxfam has been able to develop a suite of trainings, adapted to various levels of literacy and based on repeating the lessons learned on a regular basis at the weekly group meetings.

SFC has been evaluated multiple times in the nine years since it was launched, with recurring findings pertaining to the social capital created by these groups. When women meet regularly, as they do with SFC, they develop a social bond that they value even more than access to safe savings and affordable credit. Preserving this social capital is one of the most important challenges when translating SFC from cash kept in a wooden box to cashless transaction performed via a digital platform.

As we thrive to better understand the financial patterns, needs, and gaps of SFC and R4 members, Oxfam will be able to collect the data produced by group members’ transactions via a mobile solution platform. At the pilot stage,

Cross-border financial transactions will become a reality in the next decade, once legal barriers are overcome. They will be implemented at the regional level first in the FCFA Zone (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo), which accounts for 147 million people as of 2013 and had a combined GDP of $166.6 billion in 2012.
EVALUATION DESIGN

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The main evaluation questions of this learning review were:

- What are the outputs reached (level of knowledge about the mobile banking system after the training) what indication of outcomes can we document?
- What are the main areas of learning about the implementation and how can we improve the operations in the future?
- How relevant is the pilot to increase women’s access to technology (mobile and financial)?

Specifically we have:

- Analyzed the achievements compare to objectives and the progress made by the pilot.
- Assessed the level of acceptation and the appropriation of the technology by the members of SFC groups participating in the project.
- Identified the major constraints and challenges faced during the implementation and how they were solved or proposition to solve them.
- Explored ways forward and make appropriate recommendation on area of improvement.

EVALUATION TEAM

The learning review was done in house. Sala H. Dia (Information and MEL Program Officer |Oxfam - Dakar, Senegal) & Marius Chabi (Regional MEL assistant in West Africa – Oxfam) performed all of the actions needed to complete the process. Julio Espinoza (MEL advisor of the Community Finance department) supported the design process and provided feedback to the first draft of the learning review report.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach used for the learning review of the pilot phase of the project consists of a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods: documentary review, quantitative survey with the use of Mobenzi platform (mobile phone use in the data collection) and via qualitative semi-structured interviews.

1. Documentary review

   1. A documentary review has been conducted by consulting project’s activity reports of activities, progress reports and other documents related to the project and activities performed.

   2. Some documentation for secondary data regarding rural microfinance and mobile banking system in Senegal has also been used.
2. Quantitative Method

1. The sample unit is the SfC women’s group. The configuration of the intervention that is made of Control Group (non-participants) and Treatment Group (participants in the project) sets the type of assessment and therefore the sampling method. Thus both groups are taken into account in the sampling.

2. To allow a good representation and to effectively capture changes made through project interventions, $\frac{1}{2}$ of a sampling rate was chosen. Although it is very high compared to conventional surveys, this choice is explained by the fact that the number of groups is relatively small. Indeed, there are 110 groups targeted (Treatment) and 100 (Control group) in the project.

3. A sample of women having a size of 315 has been done. 165 women from treatment groups and 150 women from control groups have responded to the survey. These women are located either in Tambacounda or in Kolda.

4. Training on data collection using the platform Mobenzi has been organized for the data collectors and mobile phones were purchased for this purpose.

3. Qualitative method

1. Interviews have been conducted to obtain information on the implementation process and the achievements. 10 persons were interviewed both staffs from the implementing partner “ONG La Lumière” and Oxfam’s staff.

EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

The high burden of work the Oxfam teams bare on a regular basis was the main limitation of the evaluation. Another limitation was the budget of the pilot. Although the learning review was designed to be a light process since the beginning, projects implementing larger scale budgets have higher chances of implementing more rigorous approaches at a wider scale.
EVALUATION FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHICS & FINANCIAL ASSETS OF THE GROUPS

Area of residence

Overall, 332 women have been interviewed among which 172 from the Treatment groups and 160 from the Control group. This is slightly above the target to minor the margin of error and does not affect the quality of the results. The distribution by area of residence is presented in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of residence</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, 67% of the project's participants are from rural areas which are known for being more vulnerable than their counterparts who live in cities (32.83%).

Age

The SfC groups are constituted by relatively adults women as per revealed the summary statistics. A test for difference between the ages was not significant; therefore, no generic conclusion could be made. However, the Treatment groups seem to attract younger women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age per treatment status</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Std.Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>50.87</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>51.03</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Through the report, a test for difference would refer to the Student test (t) interpreted at a 95% level of confidence.
**About Mobile Banking Account**

Regarding the possession of mobile banking account, all the treatment groups possess a mobile banking account. Two (2) groups that are not participating in the project possess mobile banking account. This could be explained by the fact that non-participants are also exposed to mobile and hence to related services such as mobile banking.

The table below presents such findings.

*Table 3: Possession of Mobile Banking Account per treatment status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of groups possession a mobile banking account</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even if the majority of the control group has not mobile banking account, almost all these groups declare they would like to obtain a mobile banking account as described by the graph below.

*Figure 1: Control Groups’ desire to have a MBA*
Saving level throughout the project life (amount mobilized, in the mobile banking account, and in loans)

The total amount mobilized by the groups (Control and Treatment) is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average(XOF)</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>744,457</td>
<td>192,731</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It appears that on average the treatment group has gathered more resources than the control ones. The difference is massive as it approximates 286% of the control's one. We suspect in the treatment few groups which save hugely making the average to be so sensitive to their saving behavior.

On the specific question to “How much does the group have in its mobile banking account?” the analysis reveals that half of the group mobile banking balance is +15,000. This amount represents roughly 10% of the total amount collected by the treatment group. Table 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average(XOF)</th>
<th>Median^4 (XOF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>14,268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about the amount in loans, it stands out that the treatment groups make more loans to their peer members than their counterparts in the control. The differences go from +40% for the mean to +18% for the median. (T: mean=205,897; median=127,250 | C: mean=146,941; median=107,500)

**Observations:**

- The groups are mostly in rural areas and all of those who received the training possess a mobile banking account.
- 67% of the project’s participants are from rural areas.
- The members of SfC groups are adults.
- All the treatment groups possess a mobile banking account with a certain amount of saving and the control groups which have not received the training expressed the desire to have mobile banking account.
- Even if the treatment groups have a mobile banking account, the amount of saving via mobile banking is still low, approximately 10%. This is explained by their low literacy of women and mostly by the fact that the mobile banking is not free of charge. In fact, the Mobile Network Operator (here Orange) collect some “taxes” for transactions and this impedes SfC groups’ behavior. However this is a great achievement if we take into account the short duration of the project and the characteristics of the participants who are mostly illiterate and live in rural areas.

FINANCIAL AND MOBILE BANKING EDUCATION

Use of mobile phone

What do use your phone for generally?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get news (listen to radio, news)</td>
<td>9,38</td>
<td>24,38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wake up (Alarm)</td>
<td>15,7</td>
<td>35,47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possess a mobile banking account (send and receive...)</td>
<td>13,13</td>
<td>55,81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check the time, know the time</td>
<td>21,25</td>
<td>48,84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate (call, send SMS)</td>
<td>98,84</td>
<td>95,63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Use of mobile phone generally

The figure 3 shows that 55.81% of the respondents mentioned the possession of mobile banking account versus the respondents from the control groups who represent 13.13%.
**Knowledge and use of mobile banking**

The figure above demonstrates that 72% persons from the treatment have used the mobile banking while it is 17% from the control. And, the mobile banking is known by quasi all the members of the treatment groups. This reveals that the information and sensitization have impact.

![Knowledge and use mobile banking](image.png)

**Benefits of Mobile Banking Account**

![Benefits of Mobile Banking Account](image.png)
The figure 5 shows clearly that the treatment groups know the different benefits of mobile banking accounts: secure money, transfer money, and pay bills. As we can see the necessity of using mobile banking to secure and transfer money are well understood.
Mastery of phone's principal functions

Mastery of Phone's principal keys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>知晓全部</th>
<th>控制</th>
<th>治疗</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,74</td>
<td>24,38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53,13</td>
<td>86,05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

图6: 手机主要按键的掌握情况

86.05%的女性在治疗组中掌握按键，和挂断一个电话的按键，比控制组的53.13%要好。

识别数字

你能识别1000, 5000, 45000, 50000吗？

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>知晓所有数字</th>
<th>控制</th>
<th>治疗</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47,17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11,95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14,47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17,61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

图7: 数字识别

随着群体的处理方式涉及现金，我们请每个受访者识别手机屏幕上写的1000, 5000, 45000和50000的数字。结果如图所示。

尽管21
In the treatment group, 39.77% of women know all the four digits in comparison to their counterparts from the control (11.95%). Interestingly, only 5.26% of the participants don’t know these digits versus 47.17% in control. This shows the good level of knowledge acquired through the trainings.

**Mobile Banking Account Handling**

![Mobile Account Handling Indicators](chart)

*Figure 8: Mobile Banking Account Handling*

It appears from the figure 8 that treatment groups possess good knowledge in making mobile banking transaction.

- **Following the financial education on mobile banking the level of knowledge and the appropriation of the technology by the members of the groups is quite good.**
  - More than 98% of the members of the groups know what mobile banking is.
  - 72% of the persons trained have used the mobile banking compared to the others.
  - A large proportion of the women trained know the main benefits of mobile banking accounts: secure money, transfer money, pay bills.
  - 86% of the women trained master the key function of a mobile function. Before the training most of the participants did not know how to make a phone call as they cannot read. They used to ask to someone else to dial the number for them as confirmed by the women to the fieldworkers. Now they are autonomous and can at least use their phone to pass a call without help. This is very useful and makes them proud.
  - Only 39.77% of the women trained know all the four digits which mean that they still need additional support.
  - All the groups participating in the project are making mobile banking transactions.
SATISFACTION ABOUT THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION 
(TREATMENT GROUP)

The following graphs are about the project implementation and therefore are restricted to 
groups participating to the project.

![Image](image-url)

*Figure 9: Learning about Mobile Banking*

![Image](image-url)

*Figure 10: Perception and appreciation of the concept of SfC+ Mobile Banking*

![Image](image-url)

*Figure 11: Are you satisfied with the implementation of the project*
Figure 11: Satisfaction with the implementation of the project

The treatment group is generally satisfied about the project and said their neighborhood as well as themselves learned a lot about the use of mobile banking.

Have you talked about the trainings you received to your friends who are not in the group?

- Yes: 84.3%
- No: 15.7%

Figure 12: Diffusion of the training

- **The level of acceptance and appropriation of the project is very high.**
- More than 98% of the women as well as the project staffs interviewed have good appreciation and perception.
- The women are really satisfied about the mobile banking pilot and in Kolda some SfC groups especially ask the “Imam” of the mosque to pray for the project which is a good illustration of their commitment.
- Another illustration of the acceptance of the project is that they are using the mobile banking services to make transactions and continue to do so even if the project is ended.
- Some individuals even have their personal account and use it to send money to their children studying in Dakar.
- The good aspect is that they are talking about it to the others, friends and neighboring who also show big interest in accessing m
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

As a pilot, the SfC mobile banking project registered successes. Its outcomes confirm the relevance of the approach and from the answers of the survey and the interviews it appears clearly that mobile banking is useful, much appreciated by participants and responds to a need. Having those women make the step to open and use mobile banking account is the best illustration of the great potential of such an initiative to boost rural microfinance.

The project is relevant:

It has evolved from the traditional model of saving to modern one as there was a real problem of securing funds. SFC mobile has proposed an interesting alternative for secure savings and familiarized the women with the modern tools (ICT). This is a major innovation. The project thus meets a need because the groups are mature and need to move forward.

The process was participatory:

Before the implementation the consultant discussed with the agents of "La Lumière", visited women's groups to study the feasibility and see if they had mobile phone and know how to use it.

The fieldworkers interviewed said that they participated in the selection of the groups which was made on a clear basis with some criteria: be a mature group (having already gone through at least one full year-long saving cycle), have already received SFC + Business training, have an amount of savings of at least 300,000 FCFA.

The fieldworkers also participated in negotiations with the lead mobile operator “Orange money”. They are the ones who discuss with Orange Money to request subscriptions for the groups and they convinced their local shopkeepers to become orange money vendor.

The project has been accepted by the women's groups:

Surveys show that the project was well accepted by the women despite the expression of some concerns at the beginning. Some groups were victims of some MFIs who came to settle in their areas and they left with their savings. Some also wondered how they could save money through a phone but all these concerns have been overcome thanks to good awareness briefings. They now fully understand the process. The relationship of trust they have with” La Lumière” has greatly facilitated the acceptance and involvement of the women.
Training (content, approach, tools) was highly appreciated and adapted to the target which is mostly illiterate:

The important point is the novelty: the ability to master the key functions of the mobile phone, to read and dial a number is new for most of them and they were eager to learn. The use of pictures facilitated the assimilation of the training content. However some sessions were complex according to them and this needs to be resolved by a better repartition and a longer duration of the training to enable the entire women to master the technology and make transaction by their own without referring to the fieldworker.

The project has enabled SfC women to feel more autonomous:

The project achieved its objectives since it has contributed to the strengthening of women's knowledge about mobile banking. Women have learned a lot. Most of them did not know much about the basic functions of a mobile phone. They even did not know how to dial a number. Some were receiving transfers but used to put the name of other people to go take the money received, which was a problem. Today they feel more autonomous.

A woman from Kolda even said that they are six SfC group members in her home and only one knew how to use the mobile phone. Today, they all can pass call without assistance. Moreover they also can recognize the numeral digits.

Women’s knowledge and use of mobile banking has been increased:

The fact to secure money and make transactions without traveling is highly appreciated. The majority of the women trained also know how to make transactions: deposit, withdrawal, and this is demonstrated with the continuous deposit they are making through mobile banking even if the amount of the deposit is still low.

Some of the women even have personal accounts to make transactions for family purpose: for example to send money to their children that are studying in other areas. In some groups the women also organized themselves to pay their bills together. In Babagadji, Kolda, at the end of the month they gather all the members’ bills, make the payment via “orange money” and divide the transaction fees between them which enable to lower the individual fees.
LEARNING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Building confidence is at the heart of any intervention especially in terms of rural women's empowerment and new technology.

In this particular case the relationship between the implementing partner and the communities was essential to make them accept and show commitment to the project. Consultation, partnership, participation, inclusion, transparency, and a good knowledge of the environment contributed to it.

Duration is a key factor of success in such a project regarding the target groups’ characteristics to get them master and continue to use mobile banking.

The project duration is too short to allow the sustainability of the achievements. It requires “giving time to the time” because introducing new services and products (especially cashless ones) in rural communities require adequate training and ongoing support. Women have accepted the technology, but its full appropriation by all of them still reveals weaknesses as they still ask for the fieldworkers support. If women do not see the fieldworkers they may return to old practices, because it takes time to keep the good habits. A follow-up should be put in place to avoid any discouragement and sustain the gains of the project.

Illiteracy is a constraint to the mastery of all training content but the approach of the trainer and the use of visual tools facilitated the learning process for the women.

However some modules were considered too complex and too long (module 4 and 6). there is a need to extend the duration of the training, better organize the sessions and carry out the trainings within periods where women are available and not in the rainy season.

The relationship with the mobile operator has to be win-win.

It must be highlighted that even if the groups are making deposits with the chosen operator “Orange Money”, they still keep most of their funds into their traditional saving box. This is due to the fact that with SfC traditional model they can save funds and the funds are remunerated thanks to the loans’ interests. But “Orange Money” just allows securing their funds and making some transactions and at a cost.

---

5 Orange is the main mobile network operator in Senegal and has the largest network coverage. The others have less presence in rural areas. Orange Money provides an operational service in the three countries, Senegal, Ivory Coast and Mali.
They support the transaction fee (deposit / withdrawal) which is a big concern for them. Also keeping their saving in mobile account that does not generate interest may discourage them.

There are many limits in the relationship with “Orange” which is the main mobile provider in Senegal. The project brings clients to “Orange”; they should make some efforts and accept to suppress the transaction fees for the SfC groups and/or offer some incentives.

The problem of access to the SfC groups accounts has also been highlighted. The actual system does not allow to track the transaction made via orange money and this was one of the main need of SfC: have tracking records so that the SfC can be considered in the rural microfinance system which will allow the groups to access credit via the MFIs or banks.

For the future it will be very useful to have a multi-operators option and set up an independent platform for SfC to track the transactions and have an overview of the savings. Other private enterprises should be approached for this purpose, because mobile banking interests more and more mobile network operators as well as the traditional banks and they are ready to form alliances to gain more market parts.
REFERENCES

1. *Saving for Change: Financial inclusion and resilience for the world's poorest people* by Oxfam America & Freedom From Hunger

2. “Mobile Transactions for Mature Saving for Change Groups in Senegal”, Summary of Survey Results from 210 SFC Groups by Sefima Advisory Services

3. *Qualitative study of the Senegalese market—Mobile Banking* by Planet Finance

4. *The Why and How of Gender Sensitive Indicators* by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

5. *What Works for Women* by Action Aid, CARE International UK, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide UK, Oxfam GB, Save the Children UK....

APPENDIX 1

2. Interview guide: Guide d'Interview_Acteurs SFC Mobile Banking-Final.docx
Forty percent of the people on our planet—more than 2.5 billion—now live in poverty, struggling to survive on less than $2 a day. Oxfam America is an international relief and development organization working to change that. Together with individuals and local groups in more than 90 countries, Oxfam saves lives, helps people overcome poverty, and fights for social justice. To join our efforts or learn more, go to www.oxfamamerica.org.