SOCIÉTÉ NATIONALE DES EAUX DU BÉNIN (SONEB), BENIN

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Engendering Industries Welcomes New Partners

USAID's Engendering Industries program welcomes 13 new partners from 10 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East. **Read the announcement**

Engendering Industries Partner Profile

SONEB operates approximately 60 urban drinking water supply systems in Benin and serves over 245,000 customers. SONEB is partnering with USAID to increase gender equality across the company and improve company performance.

When women serve as leaders and employees, businesses benefit and company performance improves. USAID's Engendering Industries program works to increase women's participation in male dominated sectors globally. In 2021, Engendering Industrie partnered with **SONEB** in **Benin** to design workplace initiatives that will expand job opportunities for women and enhance the utility's performance.

SONEB is a state-owned utility that operates approximately **60 urban drinking water supply systems** serving over **245,000 customers**. The utility is responsible for urban areas of Benin, and is facing a need for expansion as rapid urbanization is creatin larger cities. The utility has made significant progress in improving performance and efficiency, and is considered a state succes because of improvements the utility has made in **financial stability and increased services**. Recognizing that diverse teams bu better businesses, SONEB is partnering with USAID to increase gender equality across the company to further improve company performance.

Gender Equality in Action at SONEB

Engendering Industries uses a globally-recognized **evidence-based methodology** to support women's participation in Benin's water sector. The program supports SONEB to increase opportunities for women by introducing gender equality initiatives at ea phase of the employee lifecycle—from reducing gender bias at the hiring stage, to creating strategies that will help retain female talent. Engendering Industries is supporting SONEB towards their goal of advancing gender equality within the organization.

A dedicated change management coach supports the utility and works directly with three staff to become agents of change with SONEB. A baseline assessment is conducted to identify gaps and opportunities for improving gender equality across the compa The findings are used to develop a strategic action plan that will facilitate SONEB's gender equality goals. This is supplemented l the program's partnership with the Georgetown University McDonough School of Business, which delivers the **Gender Equity Executive Leadership Program** (GEELP) to three utility employees. The GEELP is a best-in-class 12-month executive course tha empowers decisionmakers to integrate gender equality initiatives into their corporate structure.

Engendering Industries will also work to support and accelerate existing gender equality initiatives underway at SONEB, includi

- **Participation in a women's network called the Network** of Professional Women in the Water and Sanitation Sector, whic promotes women's leadership in the Beninese water sector and empowers women at SONEB.
- **Empowering the SONEB Female Workers' Association,** which meets regularly to support the career development of wom at SONEB.

About Engendering Industries

Launched in 2015, USAID's Engendering Industries program supports organizations in developing countries to increase economi opportunities for women and improve gender equality in the workplace. Expanding women's participation in male-dominated sectors leads to tangible economic empowerment outcomes for women, such as formal employment opportunities and higher income. Increased gender equality also improves an organization's business performance, helping companies meet their botton line by enhancing employee satisfaction, reducing turnover, and driving productivity. Well-functioning organizations are also vit in supporting stronger and more resilient economies. Through a customized best practices framework, demand-driven coaching and a Gender Equity Executive Leadership Program, Engendering Industries builds the capacity of leaders to implement gender equality interventions that increase the professional participation of women and improve business performance.

Read more

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