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SUCCESS STORY

THE INTEGRATED HEALTH SERVICES ACTIVITY (IHSA)

Supporting community health financing

Building capacity for resource mobilization is at the center of the Government of Benin's (GOB) decentralization strategy for improving the health and well-being of the people of Benin. The *Fonds d'appui au développement des communes* (FADeC) is a tool created by the GOB to support this strategy and attests to the government's strong commitment. The FADeC is a mechanism that transfers resources from the government to the local level, and one of its objectives is to provide communes with the necessary funds to carry out health activities. Communes, under the leadership of the mayor, are responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring the FADeC.

FADeC budget planning must respond to bottlenecks that hinder community health, including insufficient accountability of the communal council for health issues (particularly community health issues) and a lack of collaboration between the communal councils and the *médecins chefs de poste*. To support budget oversight within communes, the USAID-funded Integrated Health Services Activity (IHSA) held several meetings with communal councils on community health performance challenges during its first year of implementation. IHSA also advocated for an alignment of FADeC allocations.

Local actors commit to financing community health

At the beginning of 2019, IHSA organized and facilitated meetings on community health financing and the FADeC with elected leaders of the communes and *médecins chefs de poste* in the departments of Ouémé, Plateau, and Atacora.

These meetings brought together two partners—the city government and the *médecins chefs de poste*—to improve their population's health. During these meetings, the *médecins chefs de poste* gave presentations on the state of community health in their respective communes and indicated that they were not aware that the law regarding FADeC had been signed. They stressed the importance of being included in planning FADeC community health activities.

These meetings have demonstrated proven results in governance. City governments and *médecins chefs de poste* will now work jointly to identify challenges, plan interventions, and plan and supervise community health workers in a collaborative manner.



About the Program

The USAID-funded Integrated Health Services Activity (IHSA) is a five-year project implemented in Benin. The purpose of IHSA is to strengthen local expertise in delivering high-impact malaria, family planning, maternal and child health (MCH), and gender-based violence (GBV) services with strong citizen engagement to reduce maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent girls' mortality and morbidity.

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Finding potential sources for financing community health

In addition to the budget allocated by the GOB, IHSA supported communes in identifying potential donors within the community (e.g., cotton producers' organizations, artisans' organizations, small and medium-sized local businesses) to boost health finances in 9 of the 11 health zones supported by the project.

For example, 21 key stakeholders in the communes of Kétou and Ifangni (Plateau) participated in meetings to enhance community health financing. All individuals attending this meeting committed to making a financial contribution while expressing the desire for transparency in the management of these funds by the city government. The project anticipates that these individuals will contribute USD 2,647. Additionally, in March 2019, the *coopératives villageoises de producteurs de coton* (CVPC) of Kandi (Alibori) pledged USD 2,200 for the city to organize awareness sessions for husbands and wives on the importance of antenatal care and the use of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets. IHSA is assisting communes in designing strategies and plans to implement this fundraising campaign. IHSA expects that a more engaged community will be more likely to demand better quality of care and better health outcomes for mothers and children.

“When they are not in good shape, cotton producers cannot go in the field to work. Since we already contribute to other activities of the commune, it is normal for us to also contribute in improving our health conditions.”

Mr. Zakari Bani Orou, manager of the *union communale des producteurs de coton* (UCPC)



Participants at an information meeting on mobilizing local resources in the city of Kandi (Alibori).
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