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SUCCESS STORY

THE INTEGRATED HEALTH SERVICES ACTIVITY (IHSA)

Supporting integrated care for survivors of gender-based violence with a virtual One Stop GBV center

In Benin, gender-based violence (GBV) survivors can access an integrated package of services, including medical and psychosocial care, by visiting one of the country's One Stop GBV centers, located in the cities of Cotonou, Parakou, and Abomey. However, GBV survivors who live in other regions might be unable to access these services due to financial and other barriers.

To address this gap and increasing GBV survivors' access to care, the *Direction de la Santé de la Mère et de l'Enfant* (DSME), with technical input from IHSA, developed a model to provide integrated care for GBV survivors in areas not covered by the three existing One Stop centers. Through a pilot project in the department of Ouémé as a precursor to nationwide implementation, IHSA helped to create and launch the first virtual One Stop GBV center, which is hosted in a regular health facility and equipped to provide prevention, treatment, and psychosocial support services to clients. The virtual center complies with GBV protocols, including client confidentiality. The integrated package of services, identical to the one provided at the One Stop GBV center, is provided to survivors by general practitioners trained by IHSA on GBV case management in accordance with national guidelines.

Implementation and stakeholder training

As a first step, and with technical input from IHSA, the DSME developed a concept note describing the approach and the methodology of the virtual One Stop center, which was validated during a multi-stakeholder workshop on April 12, 2019. The workshop helped to better define the concept of the virtual One Stop center and the steps required for its implementation. The workshop was a key opportunity to obtain buy-in from medical staff, social workers, and legal actors, who will be involved in the provision of services to survivors of GBV at the center.

As a next step, DSME facilitators organized trainings in each health zone for health care workers and social workers on the integrated support model for GBV survivors, which were very well received.



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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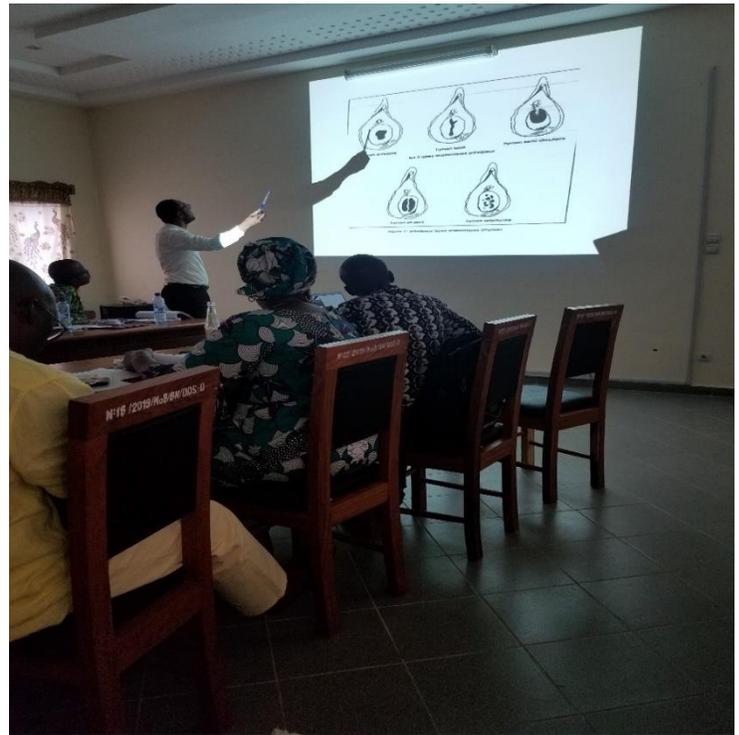


Health center teams received training on how to use GBV data collection tools, to gather statistics related to the care of GBV survivors and ensure confidentiality.

A model that shows promising results

A total of 264 health care providers (19 doctors, 106 midwives, and 139 nurses); 48 social workers; and 71 law enforcement officers in the department of Ouémé have been trained on standard operating procedures for treatment of GBV survivors.

Dr. Omer Adjibode, Gender-Based Violence Advisor for the IHSA project said, “The large number of people trained has enabled services to be launched quickly and effectively. In the health zone of Adjohoun-Bonou-Dangbo, it is now possible to obtain monthly statistics (disaggregated by age group, gender, and type of GBV) on the type of care provided to survivors of GBV.”



Participants during one of the trainings on the integrated support model for GBV survivors. Photo credit: Raphael Gnonlonfoun/IHSA

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These data will supplement data from the *Centres de Promotion Sociale* (CPS), which usually do not include data on GBV survivors who receive treatment in health centers, as these victims aren’t usually brought to the CSP after medical care. The data will contribute to the DSME’s efforts to develop detailed GBV prevention activity plans in the health zone.