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SUCCESS STORY

THE INTEGRATED HEALTH SERVICES ACTIVITY (IHSA)

Coaching helps a remote health center launch a new maternity ward and draw more clients

The Ouoré health center is an isolated facility in the commune of Kérou, department of Atacora, in Benin. It is run by a state nurse, Roubatou Goussongui Bonni, with the support of an assistant nurse, Bana Orou Toura Yacoubou, who also manages the pharmacy. Based on the volume of services provided by the health center (22 deliveries and serving a population of 6,880 people a month), Ouoré received funding to build a new maternity ward from the *Fond d'Appui au Développement des Communes (FaDeC)* in 2017. Administered by the Government of Benin, FaDeC is a fund allocated to communes to fund community health activities.

Although the maternity ward was completed in 2018, Roubatou and Bana did not receive any guidance on how to get this new area of the health center up and running. As of March 2019, the maternity ward had yet to welcome any clients.

In April 2019, the situation changed when a team from the USAID-funded Integrated Health Services Activity (IHSA) visited the isolated health center to assess skills gaps and provide coaching to the nurse and nursing assistant.

The IHSA team showed the staff simple methods for weighing newborns, how to complete children's health charts and use this data to guide the care they provide, and how to manage biomedical waste, prevent infections, and conduct postnatal consultations. The coaching also focused on welcoming clients and providing quality care in an environment that is safe, comfortable, and confidential. Additionally, the team worked with Roubatou and Bana to reorganize the facility, move maternity care equipment and supplies to the new building, and sort and store medicines in the pharmacy.

The day after the IHSA team's departure, the Ouoré maternity ward welcomed its first clients.

Following this support, Dr. Aziz Abou, médecin chef of Kérou, approached the commune's mayor and successfully advocated for electricity to be provided to Ouoré's revamped maternity ward. Roubatou exclaimed, "I'm full of joy and relief. I wish that we could receive this type of support more regularly."

Dr. Abou added, "With IHSA's support, this maternity ward constructed with FaDeC funds became operational and began serving clients."



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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Today, despite its remote location, the Ouoré health center now feels less isolated. From July to September 2019, 1,290 clients used services there – an increase of 54% from the same quarter of 2018 (840 clients). The health center personnel are more motivated, and the local authorities who supervise Ouoré are more involved in protecting the health of their citizens.

“With IHSA’s support, this maternity ward constructed with FaDeC funds became operational and began serving clients. Having a better-organized facility has made the providers’ work easier, and coaching from the IHSA team has refreshed their skills in antenatal care, postnatal care, and family planning services.”

Dr. Aziz Abou, médecin chef of Kérou



Ouoré health center's assistant nurse, Bana (right photo) runs its pharmacy, which was transformed from its former state of disorganization (left photo) with the help of coaching from IHSA. Photo credit: Marie-Agnès Agboton/IHSA