



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Activité de Services de Santé Intégrés de l'USAID (IHSA)



Pour des soins et services de santé intégrés de bonne qualité,
les autorités sanitaires, administratives et locales s'y engagent.



Leading quality assurance/quality improvement panel discussion from left to right: Dr. Alsem Orou Koukou, health zone coordinator; Dr. Marie Flore Agossou, health zone coordinator; Dr. Jacob Namboni, Departmental Director for Health for Atacora; Dr. Cyriaque Afoukou, National Malaria Control Program Coordinator; and Dr. Hippocrate Fatembo, Departmental Director for Health for Plateau. Photo credit: Azick Sèmèho Gnahoui

USAID INTEGRATED HEALTH SERVICES ACTIVITY

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2022

Analyzing Results and Challenges to Better Inform the Future

Dear Readers,

The US Agency for International Development's Integrated Health Services Activity (IHSA) is celebrating four years of service to the Ministry of Health, local leaders, and the entire population of Benin in its efforts to support the public health goals of the country. As the project enters its final year, we must use this critical remaining time to work with all stakeholders to capitalize on past experiences and build upon the achievements of the project.

A workshop to outline the final year of the project was held at the end of June to share the results of the past four years of implementation with all project stakeholders and to discuss recommendations to ensure that the project results are sustainable. We sincerely thank the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity, the prefectures, and the town hall participants who, through their support and input, helped shape the project activities.

Happy reading to all,
Dr. Floride Niyuhire
Project Director

Project Workshop to Shape the Last Year of the Project

Held June 28-29, 2022, in Cotonou, the main objectives of the workshop for the final year of the IHSA project included reviewing key achievements and discussing challenges and bottlenecks in order to find a path to action to ensure project sustainability. A total of 61 people participated in the event, including representatives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance, their local representatives,

department prefects, local government representatives, and the USAID Mission in Benin.

"After four years of implementation, it is necessary for us to assess the implementation of this project and review health care outcomes at the community level in order to create a sustainability plan," stated Dr. Petas Akogbeto, Cabinet Director for the Minister of Health, during his speech to launch the event.

The workshop focused on the project's main goals: optimizing the quality of care for mothers, children, and newborns, including in the fight against malaria; strengthening governance for community health; supporting care for gender-based violence (GBV) survivors; and combating the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants emphasized the importance of community support in the implementation of activities. Project success requires a transfer of competencies and knowledge, including technical, organizational, and managerial skills, at the operational level.

John Bernon, Health Director for USAID in Benin, celebrated the collaboration among all of the project stakeholders and also focused on the work that needs to be done during the last year of the project. "After four years of implementation in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the members of the Ministry of Social Affairs, authorities at the local level, and with the community, conclusive results have been achieved, however challenges still remain and lessons learned to achieve the ultimate goal, which is health for all with the engagement of all citizens."

Donation of Health Equipment to Benin's Emergency Services

On Tuesday, July 12, 2022, the IHSA project organized a ceremony to celebrate the donation of critically needed health equipment to the Ministry of Health. The donation included 316 pulse oximeters, 42 oxygen concentrators, and 2,100 nasal cannulas. Dr. Anges Dossou, the Minister of Health's Technical Advisor for Hospital Care, welcomed the equipment donation, remarking that it will enable health workers to provide oxygen to patients and monitor their oxygen levels, a critical need both during the COVID-19 pandemic and for the care of patients with other diseases. This important donation will be used by emergency and intensive care units in the project implementation zones.



Dr. Anges Dossou and John Bernon. Photo credit: Azick Sèmèho Gnahoui

Training for Gender-Based Violence Survivors in the Plateau Department

In order to facilitate the economic reintegration of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors, survivors need access to income-generating activities (IGAs). The IHSA project provides support to *Centres de Promotion Sociale* (Community Development Centers) to review grant applications from survivors who, due to their financial situation, don't receive benefits from the country's national welfare system and, through this process, can apply to receive assistance in developing IGAs.

June 27-30, 2022, the project provided training in local languages for GBV survivors on the support available to them. The training was facilitated by the project's IGA specialist with the assistance of local social workers, and focused on providing an orientation to GBV survivors on how to develop an IGA, to include market

research, how to open a savings account, the importance of saving money for health expenses, and revenue generation. In addition, each survivor participated in a personal interview to review the details of their chosen activity, how to anticipate certain threats, and how to develop a launch plan for the activity.

Relevant equipment was provided to survivors following the training. The 38 GBV survivors who benefited from the training are now ready to implement their IGAs in the areas of hairdressing, sewing, photography, and the processing and sale of raw materials. Coaching and mentoring service will be offered to the training participants for a minimum of six months up to a year, according to the needs of the GBV survivors, in order to ensure the sustainability of these activities.

An Innovative Governance Approach to Support the Reduction of Hospital Deaths in the Plateau Department

The decentralization that is in progress in Benin's health system places significant responsibility for the management of health issues on local actors. To support this effort, these actors have an important resource available to them: the Leadership Development Program Plus (LDP+). LDP+ is a process used by teams to address an identified common challenge in order to achieve defined results and improve desired health outcomes. This strategy is being used by several actors in Benin with support from the IHSA project, including the health zone staff and the staff of the Plateau Departmental Directorates since July 2021 to improve maternal health results.

On May 24, 2022, health staff from the Department met with a representative of the General Secretary for the Ministry of Health,

the Representative of the Plateau Prefect, a USAID delegation, as well as mayors and executive secretaries of the municipalities of Plateau Department to hear the results from the three teams tasked with implementing health system improvements through the use of LDP+. In September 2021, the Department set an objective to significantly reduce the number of maternal deaths in hospitals between October 2021 and March 2022. At the end of this six-month period, all improvement teams were able to achieve this objective. Thanks to actions focused on improving the organization of services, the number of in hospital deaths fell from 24 to 11 (a 54% reduction), using the previous year as a reference. The teams committed to maintaining the organizational and management changes, with no additional cost, that led to these results.



Participants during the May 24 workshop in Pobè (Plateau) listen to the presentation of the LDP+ results. Photo credit: Jean-Claude Lodjo

About the USAID Integrated Health Services Activity

The USAID-funded Integrated Health Services Activity is a five-year project implemented in Benin. The purpose of the Integrated Health Services Activity 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.

This document is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) cooperative agreement no. 72068018CA00001. The contents are the responsibility of Management Sciences for Health and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.