

Togo: Health System Strengthening – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ProSanté)

Increase of quality and use of basic health care services in Togo

Context

Togo is one of the countries in the world that still has a very high maternal and infant mortality rate. The under-funding of the health system leads to a lack of adequate infrastructure and qualified human resources. Poor quality of health services decreases the attendance at health centers and the demand for these services by the population. In addition, ineffective planning and inadequate monitoring of activities lead to a lack of coordination of the health actors. Weaknesses in the health system were particularly evident during the pandemic response in Covid-19.

Approach

The project's actions affect all levels of the health pyramid, from the Ministry of Health, Public Hygiene and Universal Access to Health Care (MSHPAUS)'s national directorates to 110 peripheral healthcare units (PHUs) in the Kara (80) and Central (30) regions, as well as their respective regional and prefectural directorates. More concretely, the project supports the establishment of a national healthcare quality management strategy and supports its implementation in the supported PHUs. Quality is also strengthened by equipping the facilities and providing ongoing training to its staff on various topics related to reproductive health (RH), sexual rights and infection prevention and control (IPC).

At the same time, communication and awareness-raising activities are carried out at the community level in collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs) and actors of change such as the "Tantines" (young unwed mothers) associations, mothers' and fathers' clubs and community leaders. Mass communication approaches through medias and film screening sessions support the demand stimulation.

To ensure ownership and sustainability of the actions, the steering capacities of the state partners are strengthened through organizational development activities and support in the development of framework documents, their implementation and resource mobilization.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ProSanté focuses on strengthening the resilience of PHUs and vulnerable populations to diseases with epidemic potential, strengthening the country's diagnostic capacity, supporting communication campaigns and achieving adequate immunization coverage.



Project name	Health System Strengthening – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ProSanté)
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Implemented by	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Project areas	Kara and Central Regions, Central Level
Lead Executing Agency	Ministry of Planning, Development and Cooperation (MPDC)
Duration	2017 – 2020 (ProSanté I) 2020 – 2023 (ProSanté II)
Financial volume	8.Mio € (ProSanté I) 15.640 Mio € (ProSanté II)



*Pictures:
Training of midwives on modern family
planning methods and infection prevention
and control
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Pictures:
Community awareness actions by the
Tantines
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Results in figures...

The project aims to contribute to the MSHAUS goals of reducing maternal and neonatal mortality (targeting 250 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births and 17 neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births), as well as increasing the contraceptive prevalence rate to 35% by 2022.

- More than 150,000 women of childbearing age in the Kara region have access to better quality reproductive health services;
- 82 new graduates from Kara's national school of midwifery benefited of advanced training courses while temporarily placed in 64 PHUs and 14 EmONC centers. Less than a year after the end of the placements, 93% of them were employed;
- Strengthening RH providers in the 80 PHUs in REDI counseling and contraceptive technology has significantly improved the uptake of long-acting reversible contraceptives in the Kara region, with 4,467 new cases of IUDs and implants recorded in the 80 catchment areas during the year 2021;
- Training of 6800 different change agents, including nearly 3000 Tantines, on the themes of SRHR and the prevention of COVID-19 led to the sensitization of 67,000 people. Approximately 9000 people have been reached in schools;
- To prepare for the adverse effects of climate change, a risk study and a sectoral adaptation plan have been developed. They will be the basis of a concept note to be submitted to the Green Climate Fund;
- A branch of the National Institute of Hygiene was set up in Kara in order to cover the needs for Covid-19 PCR testing in the northern regions of the country;
- The project supported the protection and resilience of 15,600 vulnerable people during the pandemic, through awareness raising on RH, psychological, medical and nutritional care actions

... and in facts

Regarding the activities to stimulate the demand for RH services, ProSanté has set up the "Tantines" approach. This term refers to young unwed mothers, victims of unwanted pregnancies, who have been trained on SRHR issues to become change agents in their communities. Active since 2001 in Central Africa, this approach was introduced for the first time in Togo in 2018 in the Kara region, in response to a high incidence of early pregnancies among young women. To date, the project has identified more than 5,000 young unwed mothers and trained nearly 3,000 among them, focusing on awareness-raising activities and community mobilization.

There were too many unwanted pregnancies here and many young mothers in the area were dropping out of school because of these pregnancies. With the arrival of ProSanté, the Tantines were able to mobilize to reduce these scourges by raising awareness among their peers.

- Tantine from Koumondé

Concerning the trainings at Kara's national school of midwifery, topics related to COVID-19 were integrated with those of SRHR, as well as infection prevention and control.

These trainings taught me how to detect and handle COVID-19 cases, especially if pregnant or in labour. They also enabled me to improve my skills in family planning, allowing me to participate in the reduction of unwanted pregnancies which constitute a scourge on our society. [...] I could not miss this opportunity to improve my skills to better serve my community. Health has no price.

- Elyse, Midwife, Kara

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