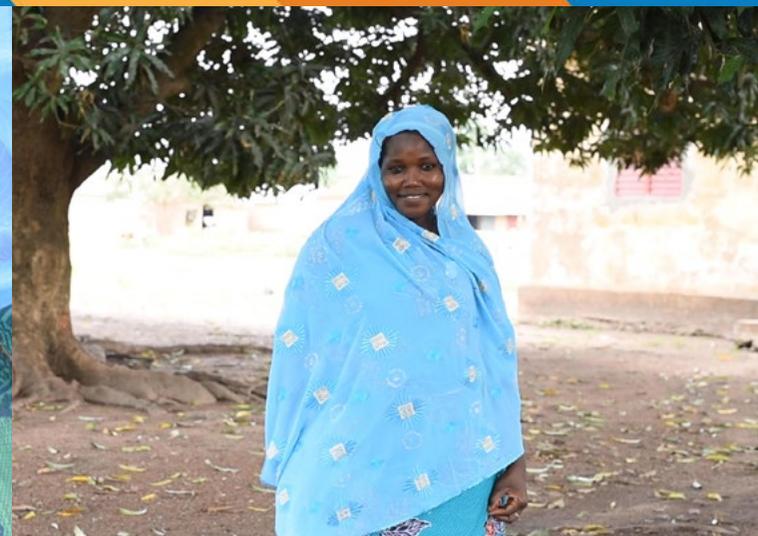




MINISTRE DE LA SANTE

REPUBLIQUE DU BENIN



IMPROVING COMMUNITY HEALTH IN BENIN

ADVANCING PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES

PHOTO JOURNAL



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ADVANCING PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES

Advancing Partners & Communities is implemented by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc., in collaboration with FHI 360. The project focuses on advancing and supporting community programs that seek to improve the overall health of communities and achieve other health-related impacts, especially in relationship to family planning. Advancing Partners & Communities provides global leadership for community-based programming, executes and manages small- and medium-sized sub-awards, supports procurement reform by preparing awards for execution by USAID, and builds technical capacity of organizations to implement effective programs. Learn more about Advancing Partners & Communities at advancingpartners.org.

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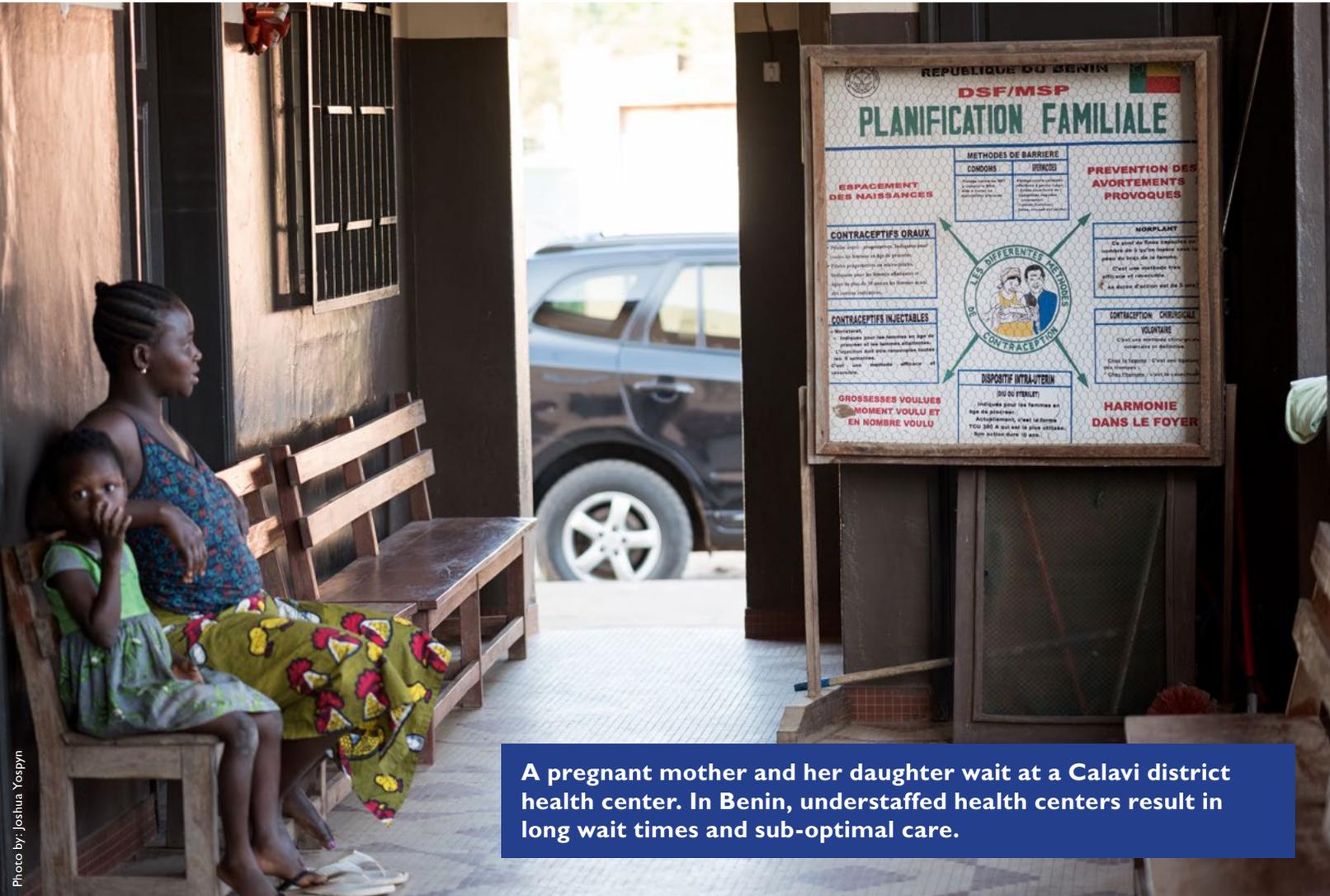
JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc., is a public health management consulting and research organization dedicated to improving the health of individuals and communities. [JSI](#) collaborates with government agencies, the private sector, and local nonprofit and civil society organizations to improve quality, access and equity of health systems worldwide.

FHI 360

FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. [FHI 360](#) serves more than 70 countries and all U.S. states and territories. FHI 360's work is grounded in research and science, strengthened by partnerships and focused on building the capacity of individuals, communities and countries to succeed.

Photos: Joshua Yospyn, JSI. Tishina Okegbe, FHI 360.

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A pregnant mother and her daughter wait at a Calavi district health center. In Benin, understaffed health centers result in long wait times and sub-optimal care.

Over the last several decades, Benin, a small country in West Africa of about 11 million people, has made major advancements in health. However, because maternal and child mortality rates remain high, especially in rural areas, the country has invested significantly to reach underserved communities with high-quality health services.

Between 2012 and 2018, the USAID-funded Advancing Partners & Communities (APC) project partnered with Benin's Ministry of Health (MOH) to strengthen community health systems, particularly family planning.

Benin is expanding access to health care through community health workers (CHWs), who are nominated by community members. They are trained and supported by local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the MOH to provide basic health education and services. As community members, these volunteers help identify and solve problems, and link otherwise hard-to-reach people with health centers.

Since 2010, CHWs have provided education and services as part of the MOH's package of basic health services and practices, known as PIHI. Critical to healthy, thriving communities, PIHI services help improve health areas related to malaria; water, sanitation, and hygiene; maternal and child health; nutrition; and family planning.



APC supported the MOH to deliver PIHI, a package of basic health services and practices, to communities. Handwashing is one of the most important health practices that communities are adopting.



Through support from APC and the MOH, three Beninese NGOs trained CHWs and gave them ongoing supervision to provide PIHI services in 10 health zones prioritized by USAID, where health service access was poor. More than 3 million people live in these zones.

SERVICES IN THE PIHI PACKAGE



water



sanitation & hygiene



maternal & child health



nutrition



malaria



family planning

CHWs give their fellow community members health information during campaigns, group sessions, and home visits. They tell their neighbors about health interventions and products, provide them with basic health services, and refer them to higher levels of care when needed. On a typical day, a CHW may provide someone with rapid diagnostic testing for malaria, treat a child who has a high fever or diarrhea with oral rehydration solution, and provide family planning counseling.



Mamdina Seidou, a CHW, facilitates a community health session in Thuy village with her supply kit and a sharps disposal box nearby. Group education increases support and demand for health services such as family planning.



The supply kit contains essential items including job aids to help CHWs explain health concepts to clients, medicines to treat them, and notebooks to record their daily activities.



“I like APC’s strategy because it takes into consideration our current needs and activities to build our capacity. It’s a flexible and adaptable strategy, and we have truly appreciated their support.”

—Halima Coulibaly, project manager for PIHI activities, Sia N’Son

Sia N’Son is a motivated local NGO that has worked on health and microfinance projects since 1995 to advance community development. Through CHWs, Sia N’Son brought PIHI services to several health zones in southeast and northwest Benin.

Staff from Sia N’son and two other NGOs, Bupdos and Dedras, built their technical, organizational, and managerial skills through APC workshops and mentoring. Not only can these NGOs now conduct high-quality programming; they are better prepared to receive and manage USAID funding, which is key to continuing their community health work.

Photo by: Joshua Yospyn

Sia N’son staff in Djougou health zone.

DEVELOPED CAPACITY THROUGH NGOS

 **24 capacity-building workshops for NGOs**



 **28 NGO staff trained**



 **NGOs supported 2,080 CHWs to deliver high-quality care**



Improved Health Outcomes

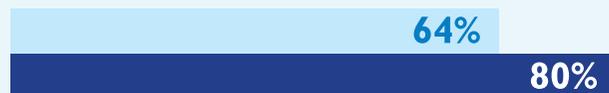
% of pregnant women with a danger sign who sought care at a health center



% of children with a fever tested for malaria



% of children with a danger sign referred by a CHW



■ 2015 ■ 2018

Increased awareness about community health services

- 2 annual national community health fairs organized
- More than **7,000** people learned about health topics



“I must admit that the NGO enlightened us by explaining our role in community health. We quickly came to realize the importance and decided that we should provide support for the achievement of community health in Tchaourou.”

—Mayor Sounon Boco

Photo by: Joshua Yospyn

Mayor Sounon Boco budgeted 1.1 million cfa (approximately \$2,000 US) for community health activities in 2019.

In Benin, mayors have an important role in directing resources for their towns. APC-supported NGOs helped 18 mayors allocate funding and develop strategic plans to guide community health activities.

The mayors also learned about their role in keeping their communities healthy. Bio Sounon Boco, the mayor of Tchaourou District in northern Benin, realized that health financing is crucial to building resilient communities, and budgeted 1.1 million cfa (approximately \$2,000 US) for community health activities in 2019.



One of the critical services that CHWs provide in Benin is family planning. In 2012, only 7.9 percent of married women of reproductive age were using a modern method of family planning, and one in four wanted to stop having children or to space her next child but was not using a family planning method.

The Government of Benin committed to expanding access to contraceptive options, particularly for women living in hard-to-reach areas. This goal sought to enable women and couples to decide when and if they wanted to have children, resulting in healthier women, children, and families.

To help reach the country's family planning goals, APC began working with the MOH in 2014 to introduce voluntary community-based family planning programming.

“(Family planning) is useful for us because we are relieved from suffering. For example, it helps us to space child births and allows our children to grow in good health. It is really good for us. Look at my child right in front of you, she is doing well and my wife is not pregnant. With family planning, we are able to have savings.”

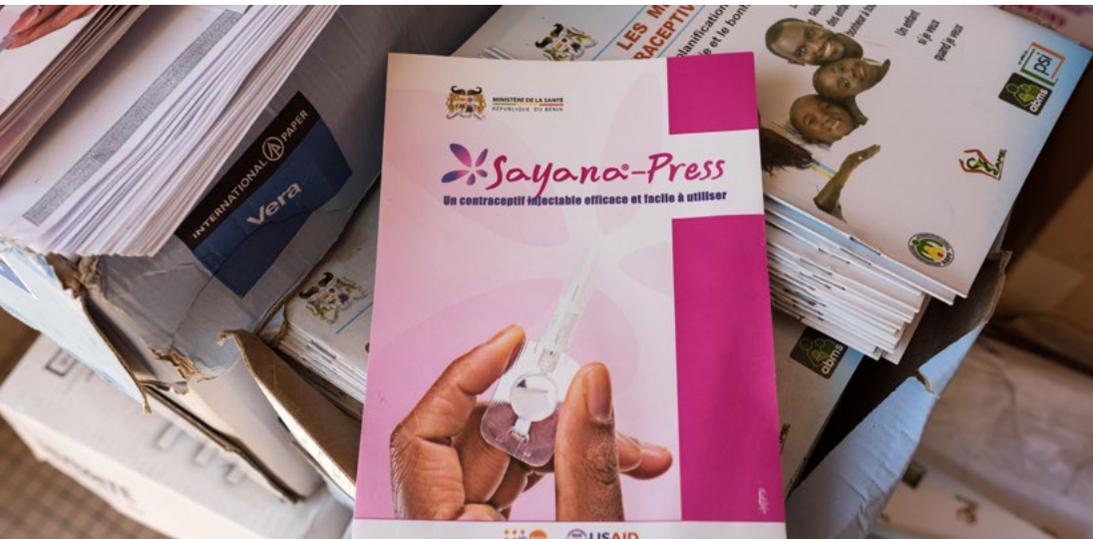
—Machoudou Mare Gobi and his wife, Boni Kokpan, Yakpabé village



A CHW explains how to use oral contraceptive pills during a community health session.



Machoudou and Boni use family planning to space children so they can better provide for their daughter.



CHWs received DMPA-SC training materials, job aids, and data collection tools.



Sayana Press® is easy to use, lasts three months, and is 99 percent effective at preventing pregnancy.

In 2016, the MOH began to allow CHWs to provide DMPA-SC, also known as Sayana Press.® DMPA-SC is a small, pre-filled, easy-to-use injectable contraceptive that lower-skilled health workers, such as CHWs, can be trained to give women.

The Maternal and Child Health Unit of the MOH and APC led a consortium to introduce DMPA-SC in communities in the 10 USAID priority health zones. The consortium trained facility-based health workers and CHWs to administer the contraceptive, provided ongoing supervision to CHWs after the training, and developed job aids and data collection tools for CHWs.

The consortium's other members were:

- Beninese Association for Social Marketing and Communication for Health
- Beninese Association for Family Planning
- University Research Corporation
- USAID
- United Nations Population Fund

CHWs receive support from the consortium partners during monitoring visits so that they can overcome challenges, including difficulties completing data collection forms and product stockouts. CHWs are also encouraged to ask questions and discuss successes.



Photo by: Tishina Okegbe

An MOH official (right) visits a CHW in Kandi Health Zone.



Photo by: Joshua Yospyn

A CHW gives a client an injection of DMPA-SC.

Véronique Honfo lives in Calavi. After learning about the benefits of family planning from her local CHW and discussing it with her husband, she decided to try DMPA-SC. She is pleased that she can simply call a CHW from her village to provide the next injection in her home and encourages her friends to adopt family planning as well.

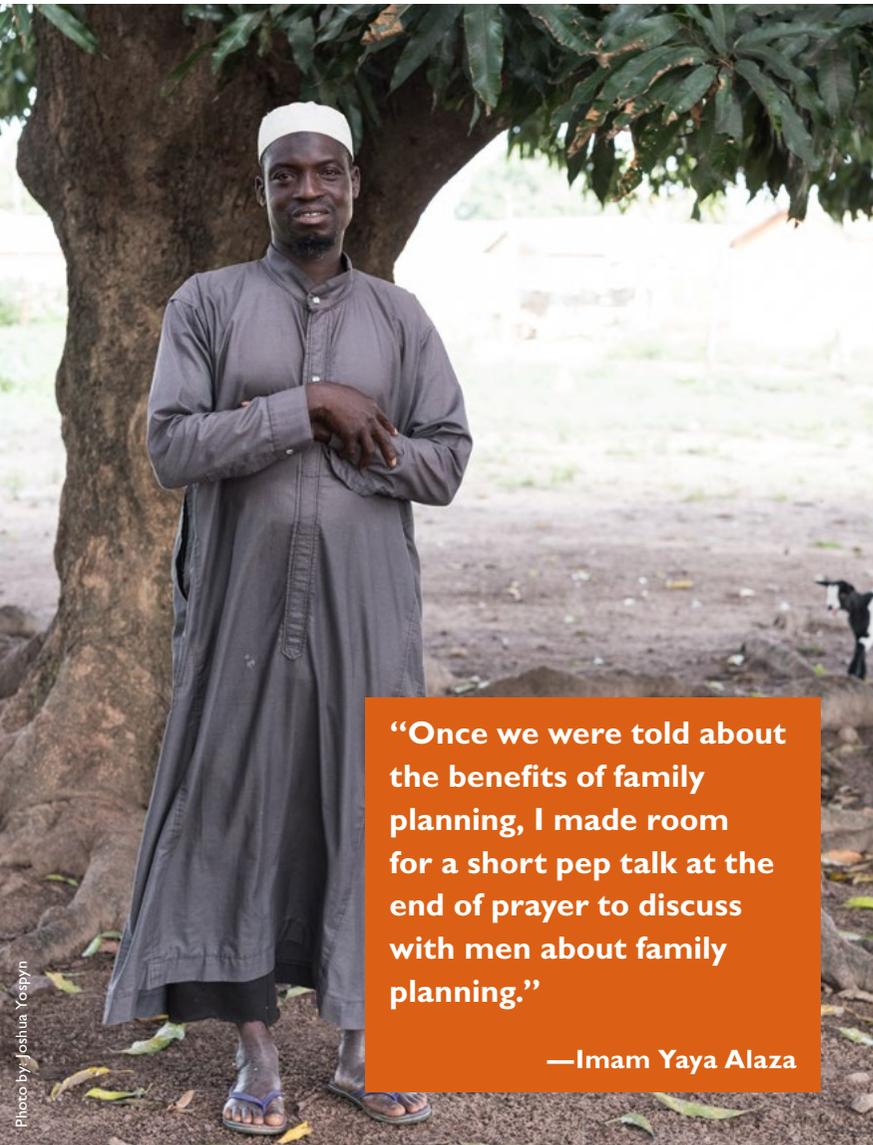
The Government of Benin has committed to expanding access to DMPA-SC by nationally scaling the method in the public sector, introducing it in the private sector, and piloting self-injection of the contraceptive by women themselves.

“Today, we the women are also able to plan births, and therefore devote more time for our income-generating activities to support our husbands.”

—Véronique Honfo, family planning client



Photo by Joshua Yosayn



“Once we were told about the benefits of family planning, I made room for a short pep talk at the end of prayer to discuss with men about family planning.”

—Imam Yaya Alaza

Imam Yaya supports family planning and believes that the Quran does not forbid its use.



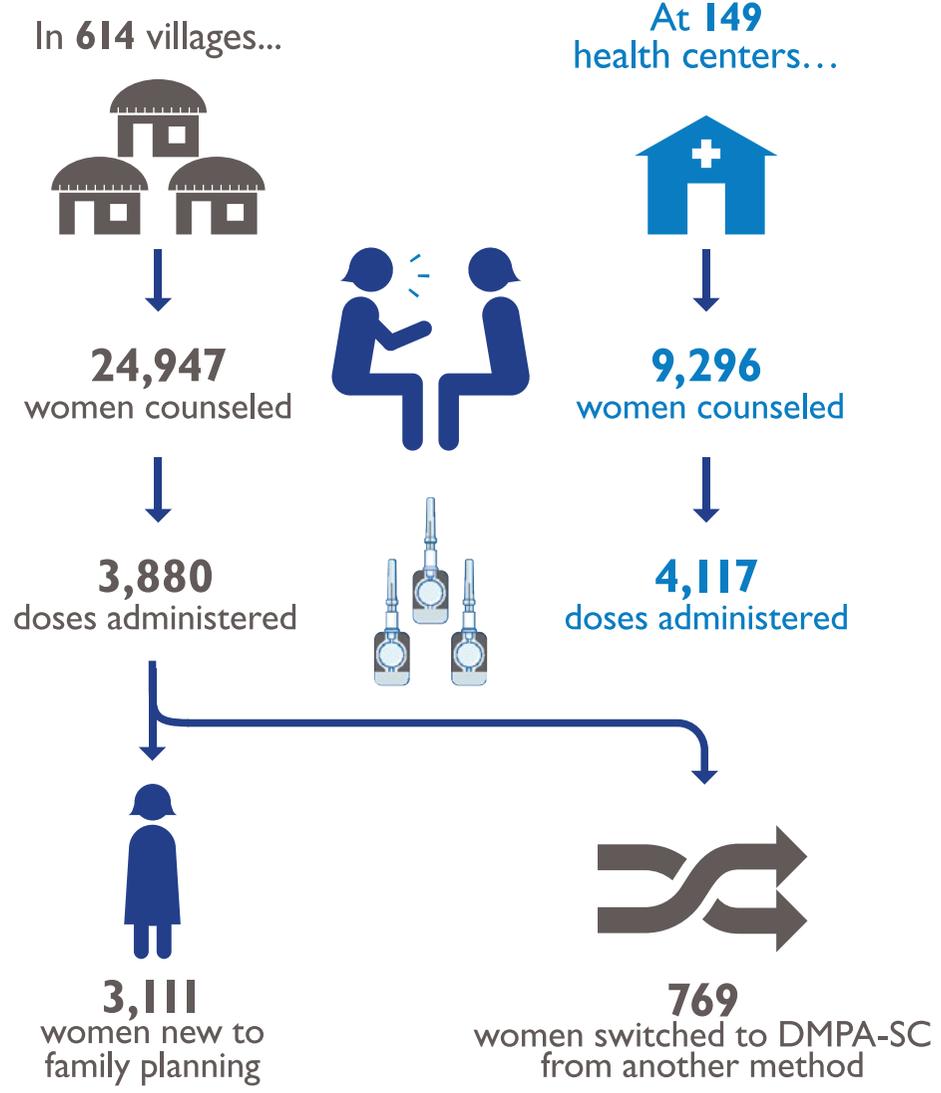
Men gather to listen to a community health discussion about the benefits of family planning. The availability of family planning options allows women and couples to achieve their desired family size.

Yaya Alaza is an Imam in Agrogrossi village in northwestern Benin. He learned about family planning from CHWs and health facility staff, and the need to space births for a healthier community resonated with him. He passed this information on to his congregation members and has become a family planning champion.

Religious leaders and community members across the 10 health zones attended sessions on family planning and its benefits. Participants learned about the full range of family planning method options available in Benin and the consortium talked about DMPA-SC. Community members attended the sessions in large numbers and gave positive feedback about the discussions.

RESULTS FROM INTRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY-BASED PROVISION OF DMPA-SC | JUNE 2017 - JUNE 2018

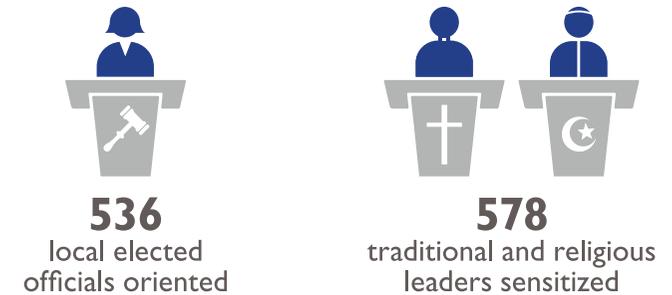
7,997 women adopted DMPA-SC in 10 USAID-priority health zones



Employed cascade training to roll out DMPA-SC



Engaged community members to raise awareness about voluntary family planning methods, including DMPA-SC



Looking Forward

The MOH has committed to expanding access to DMPA-SC by:

- nationally scaling up the method in the public sector
- introducing the method in the private sector
- piloting self-injection



“In the past, a mother would give birth and a little while later become pregnant again, even though her body was not yet ready to conceive. As a result, she might experience complications during delivery. But today with family planning, such occurrences are rare.”

—Rancar Kohonou, a CHW supported by Bupdos in Calavi.

Photo by Joshua Yospy



Photo by: Tishina Okegbe

Client satisfaction is important in any health endeavor.

Since 2012, the USAID-funded Advancing Partners & Communities project, led by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. and its partner, FHI 360, has worked in over 40 countries.

APC advances and supports community programs that improve the overall health of communities and achieves other health-related impacts, especially related to family planning. APC increases access to community-based health services, spanning a spectrum of health issues.





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