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USAID Renovates Health Facilities in Zou-Collines

“We cannot talk about quality of service and care when women give birth in our dilapidated buildings,” said Dr. Edmond Gbedo Sossa, the Director of Health of Benin’s southern Départements of Zou and

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PHOTO: PIERRE ACHADE/USAID

Alimatou Sarrè proudly shows a picture of her son: “It is because my children finished school and got good jobs, that now they can send me lots of money all the time.” Read on “Child Trafficking Doesn't Pay,” below.

Child Trafficking Doesn't Pay

by Pierre Achade, USAID/Benin

Mother highlights economic returns on her children's education

“By giving their kids to traffickers, parents are jeopardizing their own future as well as their children’s lives.” Pointing a warning finger at a circle of villagers assembled under a tree, Alimatou Sarrè, a seventy year-old woman, voices her discontent with the situation of child trafficking in Tiranga. Tiranga is a village of northern Benin with a population of 985 people, and is located in the district of Copargo, in the Donga department.

Alimatou Sarrè is a widow. She belongs to the women’s association of Tiranga. The association works with UNICEF and USAID to combat child trafficking. In Benin, USAID supported UNICEF to set up community based com-

“By giving their kids to traffickers, parents are jeopardizing their own future as well as their children’s lives”

mittees and works with other community groups, like the women’s association of Tiranga, to raise awareness about the dangers of child trafficking.

Working together, these associations also help to rescue children

and put a stop to child trafficking. When Sarrè volunteered to join the association, other members were reluctant to accept her because of her age. On Sarrè’s insistence, the association finally accepted her. However, to try and discourage Sarrè, the association challenged her with the tough responsibility of monitoring school enrollment and attendance of children in class. The association was confident that Sarrè would not last very long in this demanding role.

Sarrè proved them wrong. Today, she demonstrates how she uses her age to her advantage.

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(Health Facilities, continued from page 1)

Collines, during a visit to health facilities selected for renovation. The rehabilitation of health centers is part of the Integrated Family Health Project (PISAF) of USAID. This \$15.5 million, five-year project is funded by the American people and implemented for USAID by University Research Co. LLC (URC) which works in partnership with the Departmental Health Services of Zou and Collines.

Through PISAF, USAID and the Ministry of Health work to improve the quality of health services and benefit the most vulnerable populations in Benin.

From 2008 to 2010, the U.S. Government has funded the restoration of 20 health centers in the departments of Zou and

Collines, for a total investment of 274,668,517 FCFA (\$550,000).

During 2010 alone, eight maternity hospitals, two clinics and two living quarters of Zou and Collines have been rehabilitated for a total investment of 168,353,666 FCFA (\$337,000). The health facilities concerned are the mater-



Dr Milton Amayun, USAID/Benin Family Health Team Leader greets mothers and children at the renovated maternity of Kpakpame.

nity units of Dasso, Kpakpame, Monsourou, Mougnon, Sinwé,

Logozohè, Minifie, Sokponta, the health centers of Agbokpa-Mougnon, and the living quarters of the midwife and nurse of Monsourou.

"We thank USAID and welcome its valuable contribution through PISAF for the continuous improvement of quality of care and health services in Zou and Collines," said Gbedo Sossa at the inaugural ceremony, which the cheering population celebrated on May 27, 2010 in the presence of Beninese and U.S. Government officials.

U.S. Ambassador James Knight said that these renovated health centers reflect the will of the U.S. Government and the American people to support the Government of Benin in its efforts to provide high quality

health care for people in the urban and rural areas of Benin. ■

(Child Trafficking, continued from page 1)

To convince the community to join the fight against child trafficking, she talks of the success of her own children. "I'm sure that many of those who chose to traffic their children can't say that they are happy today. But look at me! I'm well dressed. I have all the food I need and I can buy what I want."

Sarrè explains how she suffered to educate her children. "It is because my children finished school and got good jobs, that

now they can send me lots of money all the time."

To convince a skeptical audience, Sarrè shows a large, framed picture of one of her son who belongs to the Peace Keeping Force

School enrollment increases when communities organize to combat child trafficking.

of the United Nations and supports her.

The combined efforts of USAID and UNICEF working together with the women's association, the local committee for combating child trafficking, and women like Sarrè, are helping to protect Tiranga children from being trafficked. Because the committees have reduced the number of children being taken away, school enrolment has increased dramatically.

"Only two years ago," said Tiranga school director, "the school had less than 50 students. Today, 125 children attend school, including 48 girls." ■

Basic Education Team in Action

USAID a Committed Partner in Promoting Quality Education in Benin

School Principals Trained on Teacher Performance Tools

On April 6th, James Knight, U.S. Ambassador to Benin, participated in launching the first training of primary school principals under the USAID Teacher Motivation and Training (TMT) project. The event was held at the Ayelawadje Hotel in Porto Novo. Chabi Zecharia, the Minister of Primary Education, attended, as well as a number of other dignitaries, including the Prefect of the Oueme and Plateau Departments, the Ministry of Primary Education General Secretary, and several of the National Directors of Primary Education, as well as the Mayor of Porto Novo.

The training workshop introduced 100 primary school principals to the Standards-based Classroom Observation Protocol for Educators (SCOPE) tool, which will help them to assess teacher classroom performance and understand their training needs.

The training lasted four days, during which the school principals learned the key elements of the SCOPE tool,



James Knight, U.S. Ambassador to Benin, and Chabi Zechariah, Minister of Maternal and Primary Education shake hands.

including: inquiry-based teaching, collaborative work, and problem solving. During the course of the training, the participants attended practical sessions by watching videos of real classrooms. The principals pointed out that there are similarities between the evaluation tools currently used in Benin and the SCOPE observation scale. However they found out that the new tool sets forth an unprecedented level of detail and accuracy.

The school principals left the training with the feeling that they had acquired an important tool for supervising teacher performance, but they

know that their devotion would be crucial to the success of the program.

Through "Support for Primary Teachers" (TMT), a \$6.3 million, four-year project that started on October 20, 2009, USAID aims to improve the quality of education by training principals and teachers. TMT adds an innovative initiative that will award prizes to the best teachers and most efficient schools.

By motivating schools and their teachers to excel, USAID renews to the Government and people of Benin its support to quality education and Benin's national strategy for Education for All by 2015. ■

New USAID Basic Education Project in the Making in Benin

The Basic Education and Social Services Team (BESST) hosted two USAID education experts during the week May 17th to 24th. Dr. Yolande Miller-Grandvaux from USAID/EGAT and Mr. Pape Sow, USAID/Senegal Education Team Leader, had a double mission for their Benin TDY. First they participated in the mid-term evaluation of USAID's Girls' Education and Community Participation Project, implemented by World Education. Following the evaluation workshop, they traveled into the field. Talking to

Mothers' Associations, which



Dr. Yolande Miller-Grandvaux, center, with delegates of Mothers' Associations.

were created by the project to support girls' access to primary school, Yolande and Pape were

impressed by the women's passion to educate all their children and ensure that more girls can attend school. The second task of the TDY was to help BESST conceptualize a new education program. Following the presentation of the basic education assessment and a brainstorming session with USAID/Benin senior management, Yolande and Pape drafted the strategy and elements of a new basic education program. Both reflect realistic but ambitious development goals for USAID to improve basic education in Benin. ■

USAID Contributes to Benin's Central Pharmacy Reform



Ambassador James Knight and Health Minister Issifou Takpara shake hands at CAME's General Assembly.

On April 8, 2010, the General Assembly of Benin's Central Medical Stores (CAME) approved and ratified its new legal framework. The reform follows a request by the Ministry of Health to improve Benin's medicine distribution system. USAID responded and collaborated with the Ministry in overhauling the legal framework of CAME's operations, including its statutes, internal regulations and the partnership agreement that binds it to the Government of Benin. USAID and the Ministry of Health ensured that reforms were promptly adopted by the Government of Benin. The new laws will increase the efficiency and transparency of CAME's operations to better serve the needs of Benin's populations for quality medicines and health products. ■

Mission News

At an Awards Ceremony held on May 12, James Knight, U.S. Ambassador to Benin, and Janet Schulman, Acting USAID Director, handed awards to high achieving USAID employees who distinguished themselves during the past year.



Elvire Houenassou, Women Justice.



Simplice Takoubo, Health Logistics.



Michele Seibou, Family Health.



Clément Capo-Chichi, Nadège Deguénon, Toni Dossa, Virgile Cossou, Executive Office.



Bernard Gnonhoué, Driver.

Take your Children to Work Day: On April 22, mission children took a tour of USAID offices and met with Acting Director, Janet Schulman. Children listened to Dr. Milton Amayun, Family Health Team Leader, talk about malaria and mosquito nets.

