INTEGRATE HEALTH

Optimizing Community Health Worker Practices in Togo

Pilot phase in four health districts (Anié, Ogou, Oti, Tandjoare)

6,335

out of 14,399 pregnant women referred by CHWs to health facilities for prenatal consultations (44%)

39,216

home visits made by CHWs, approximately 4 visits per month per CHW

28,592

out of approximately 77,831 children under the age of 5 cared for by CHWs (37%)

In its 2020-2025 roadmap, the Government of Togo (GOT) committed to achieving universal health coverage (UHC) for all by improving access to quality basic health services. As part of this commitment, in October 2022, the Council of Ministers approved and adopted a strategy to optimize Community Health Worker (CHW) practices as an approach to achieve UHC in Togo. The strategy to optimize the practices of CHWs is currently being implemented in four districts (Anié, Ogou, Oti, and Tandjoaré) with support from partners including WHO, the Global Fund, UNICEF, Integrate Health (IH), the Susan Buffett Foundation, and UNFPA.

As a technical and financial partner, IH provides support to promote the documentation and scale-up of a model involving professional CHWs who are trained, equipped, supervised, and motivated to deliver quality care at the last mile.

Implementation

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene, the Ministry of Universal Access to Care, and other technical and financial partners, IH is working to strengthen primary health care in Togo through operational, institutional, and sustainability activities, such as:

- Training of 846 CHWs in the four pilot districts, contributing to the professionalization of front-line health workers.
- Accreditation of 202 CHWs in Anié after a practical internship in health facilities, equipping them to offer short-term modern contraceptive methods.
- Geolocation of CHWs and community relays in Anié and in the seven health districts of the Kara region to improve planning and monitoring of last-mile interventions.

"I believe in a promising future for community health in my country. I am very satisfied with the quality of the training we received. I am committed to putting the skills I've gained into practice to improve the health of the people in my community. I am proud to be able to contribute to reducing infant mortality in my country."

- Montomao Blougbiegou, Community Health Worker, Djitohuin village, Anié district

Lessons Learned

Training of Trainers improved ownership and continuity in capacity strengthening for CHWs.

Training of 202 CHWs, followed by accreditation in health facilities, ensured CHW readiness to deliver quality healthcare in line with national standards.

Ensuring reliable CHW payment is essential for sustaining the interventions.

Technical and financial support from IH is critical for the pilot phase's success and the naitonal scale-up of professional CHWs.

Lack of coordination between technical and financial partners hinders joint planning and information sharing.

Challenges

- Absence of a national-level intersectoral coordination body, despite the existence of Decree No. DES/2019/MSHP/SG on the establishment of a National Coordination Committee for Community-Based Interventions in Togo.
- Lack of formal commitment by GOT to take responsibility for incentivizing CHWs.
- Insufficient budget for continuous supply of medicines and contraceptives to CHWs. An estimated 300 million CFA (534,000 USD) per year is needed for the four pilot districts.
- Insufficient funding for geolocating all 7,948 CHWs nationwide. The estimated cost is 95 million CFA (170,000 USD). IH has committed to providing technical and financial support for the geolocation of CHWs in the Kara region and Anié district.

Next steps

- Facilitate the establishment of a national multisectoral coordination framework, under the leadership of GOT.
- Provide technical and financial support for the midterm evaluation of the pilot phase of the CHW optimization project.
- Assist in developing a national scale-up plan for the CHW optimization strategy.
- Share the results from CHW geolocation in Kara and Anié with government, technical, and financial partners.
- Support the organization of a resource mobilization roundtable to promote the professionalization of CHWs in Togo.

"I am satisfied with the quality of the training. The selected CHWs demonstrated a high level of proficiency in the procedures and protocols for treating illnesses in children under five, treating pregnant women, and providing short-acting contraceptive methods. Their commitment is an encouraging sign for community health in Togo."

- Komlan Dzifa Gbodo, Childhood Illness Focal Point, Anié district