



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE



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## BENIN

# U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PERFORMANCE PUBLICATION Fiscal Year 2009

### FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

The United States foreign assistance program in Benin supports the country's long-term goal to reduce poverty. Resources focus on investing in the health, education, and social development of the people of Benin, while promoting peace and security.

In FY 2009, the people of Benin benefitted from enhanced access to health services and disease treatment and prevention. The number of people participating in community-based insurance groups doubled. Visits for family planning counseling at clinics supported by the United States Government (USG) surpassed targets, and the demand for contraceptives showed a steady increase in target populations. Foreign assistance resources also increased the number of women benefiting from a practice to reduce post-partum hemorrhage, thus contributing to the long-term goal of reducing maternal mortality in the country.

Under the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), the distribution of mosquito nets nationwide to children under five and pregnant women contributed to increased attendance at antenatal consultations and preventive treatment among pregnant women. Residential spraying of homes with insecticide protected over 500,000 people from disease-carrying mosquitoes. PMI also assisted the Government of Benin (GOB) with the development of a long-term spraying strategy. Over 1,200 local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), women's group members, and community health workers were trained in malaria prevention and treatment. These same groups conducted activities reaching over 145,000 people with messages on malaria treatment and prevention, and net usage.

USG programs continued to support Benin's efforts to improve the quality of primary education and reduce the persistent gap in the number of girls and boys who enroll and stay in school. With funding from the Africa Education Initiative, the Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program provided scholarships for 1,101 girls and 563 boys to attend school in FY 2009. USG resources also contributed to the training of 10,000 unlicensed community teachers to enhance their skills and prepare them to take the national teaching certification exam. Thirty thousand pedagogical materials were produced and distributed to teachers and trainers. Community participation in school

management was enhanced with the creation of 287 new Mothers' Associations – dynamic groups that empower women to provide input and make decisions on how their children are educated.

Social services programs strengthened the GOB's ability to assist victims of child trafficking and gender based violence (GBV). Under the Women's Justice and Empowerment Initiative (WJEI), mass media and direct sensitization activities reached over two million men, women, and children with messages to raise awareness of the dangers of child trafficking and GBV. Over 1,784 victims of GBV received shelter and medical and legal assistance, and 324 public and private services providers were trained to better care for victims.

The capacity of the Beninese Armed Forces played an active role in preserving and promoting peace and security within the country. Regional security was enhanced by training in leadership, management, and English. Such efforts reinforce Benin's position as a stable United States ally in a historically unstable region, and support shared long-term goals of peace and prosperity.

Among the persistent challenges in implementing the USG foreign assistance program in Benin are weak planning capacity, management systems, and governance in the public sector. USG resources helped the GOB to develop a significant reform package to improve the management of health commodities by Benin's Central Medical Store. To avoid stock outs and expiration, the USG has agreed to a one-year transitional plan to deliver drugs directly to beneficiary service points while reforms are implemented.

## **HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE**

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### **Peace and Security**

During FY 2009, foreign assistance resources were used to send one Beninese Armed Forces officer to Ranger Training, and one officer to an International Defense Management Course. Resources also funded the purchase of a new English-language lab to be installed at the Bembèrèkè Military Training Center. The new lab is expected to arrive in Benin around August 2010. Three Defense International Institute of Legal Studies trainers also organized a Mobile Education Training in Benin for about 22 Beninese participants including Navy officers, NGOs, police officers, a media representative, and officials from the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior.

As part of the Africa Partnership Station (APS) program, Benin received the visit of the *USS Robert G. Bradley*, and the program funded a ship riders' program for 11 Beninese Navy officers on board U.S. ships. A Beninese Navy Commander and a Naval Base Commander attended APS Planning Conferences and an International Sea Power Symposium. In December 2009, Benin is expecting two defender boats. These boats will help to reinforce maritime security and safety as well as coastal border surveillance.

During the same fiscal year, the Department of State's African Center for Strategic Studies funded the participation of two Beninese military officers in the New Generation of Military African Leaders training, the participation of one civilian and two military officers in the Senior Leaders Seminar, the participation of one civilian physician and one military physician in the Health and Security in Africa Seminar, and the participation of three high level military officers and one civilian authority in the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) Strategic Training Seminar.

In June 2009, United States Marines and Beninese Armed Forces organized a very successful military exercise called the Benin Shared Accord Doumagnore 2009. The exercise involved about

400 members of the U.S. military from different branches of the Armed Forces, including a large number of U.S. Marine reservists from New Orleans, Louisiana. In addition to tactical training, the U.S. forces provided humanitarian, medical, and civilian assistance.

The Department of Defense (DOD)'s Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program provided more equipment and field training to support Benin's military readiness for peacekeeping deployments.

The DOD ECOWAS Regional Information Exchange System provides material and maintenance for an internet-based communications system to enable Benin to communicate effectively with its neighbors in the region.

In general, all U.S. military programs in Benin are intended to help build the capacity of the Beninese military to deploy peacekeeping troops effectively, and to secure its borders and maritime domain. The Beninese Armed Forces are committed to playing an active role in the sub-region.

Other funding has been made available through the DOD-administered Counterterrorism Fellowship Program. These funds allowed one Beninese civilian to attend training at the George C. Marshall Center in Garmisch, Germany. It also allowed participation of a Beninese military officer in the Legal Aspects of Fight against Terrorism Seminar as well as the Advanced Alumni Africa Seminar.

## **Health**

In FY 2009, USG health programs significantly contributed to increasing access for the Beninese population to quality family health care, and continued to lead the health sector with innovative and integrated approaches. The U.S. Agency for International Development worked closely with the Benin Ministry of Health to reinforce local management capacity, promote quality assurance and the institutionalization of the improved approach and the improved services, mobilize communities to change behavior, stimulate the demand for quality services, and develop multi-sectoral and collaborative approaches.

USG resources support quality assurance activities in the areas of post-partum hemorrhage prevention, essential newborn care, malaria, preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS from mother to child, family planning, and the integration of HIV/AIDS and family planning and reproductive health services. To improve financial access, the USG is supporting the creation of community-based insurance groups and social marketing of essential health products and services. In FY 2009, 45 new insurance groups were created, doubling the number of people covered from 15,158 to 29,694. Social marketing activities have made condoms, contraceptives, diarrhea treatment kits, water purification tablets, and bed nets available to the Beninese public at subsidized prices.

The integrated project approach of the USG program in Benin has significantly contributed to achieving long-term health objectives. One of them is the Active Management of Third Stage of Labor (AMTSL), which was introduced under the USG health program in FY 2007. In September 2009, a declaration was signed between the Minister of Health and the National Midwife Association to scale up AMTSL to reduce post-partum hemorrhaging and maternal mortality.

The USG health program has also pursued strengthening community health workers and local NGO capacity to promote family health. With the start of a new community case-management activity in five selected health zones, USG programs will assist the GOB to develop best practices to involve communities and local NGOs in managing malaria, pneumonia, and diarrhea at the community level.

The PMI has provided more visibility for USG assistance to Benin. The distribution of Long Lasting Insecticide-Treated Nets (LLINs) nationwide to children less than five years of age during routine immunization services and to pregnant women during antenatal visits has contributed to increasing vaccination rates and attendance at antenatal consultations and increased preventive treatment. A second campaign of indoor residual spraying (IRS) was successfully conducted, protecting 512,491 people. PMI assisted the Ministry of Health with the development of a long-term IRS strategy to guide future IRS operations.

Knowing that 60 percent of the population uses private service providers, the USG health program expanded its interventions to the private sector. In FY 2009, commodities such as contraceptives, LLINs, ACT (artemether-lumefantrine) drugs, and lab equipment were provided to recognized private clinic networks.

## **Education**

The focus of the USG education program in FY 2009 was on training teachers, developing learning materials for teachers, and working with the Mothers' Associations to address barriers to girls' education – all of which are central concerns of primary education in Benin. Over 10,000 community teachers and their instructors received in-service training, and 30,000 copies of learning materials of the French, mathematics, and social science modules produced for the training of these teachers were provided. A total of 686 Parents' and Mothers' Associations were trained to increase their capacities in school management and support to girls' education. In FY 2009, 287 new Mothers' Associations were created, providing women a voice in the management of schools and the education of their children. The Mothers' Associations initiated more than 1,200 activities to address the barriers preventing school-age children from attending school. These activities ranged from providing poor children with the required school uniform and school supplies to retrieving children who had been trafficked within and outside of Benin.

Several FY 2009 actual performance measures were significantly higher than the targets due to results produced by one ongoing and one new project. The Girls' Education and Community Participation project trained all the school directors and school district superintendents within its project zones on school administration and transparent financial management. This greatly increased the number of administrators trained. The Community Teacher Professional Training Project, new in FY 2009, developed a third training module, producing 10,000 more copies for the in-service training of teachers.

Despite the gains made in FY 2009, much remains to be done to build a capable and qualified teaching force in Benin. Basic education activities will continue to focus on increasing the numbers of qualified teachers and improving teaching skills by working with the GOB on human resources policy development, providing pedagogical materials for the newly opened teacher training colleges, and continuing support of the in-service distance-learning program designed to allow currently active but unqualified teachers to earn a teaching certificate.

The USG education program will continue to train teachers and to develop and provide learning materials. Specifically, a new education activity will provide learning materials to newly opened teacher training colleges and pilot a teachers' motivation initiative. In FY 2010, Benin expects to report increased passing rates of girls in the targeted zones as a measure of the impact of the Mothers' Associations on removing the barriers preventing girls from succeeding and continuing in primary school. The mission in Benin will also measure the impact of the in-service distance

learning activity on improving the performance of the community teachers by measuring the increased pass rate of students completing primary school who were taught by these teachers.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

In FY 2009, the WJEI continued to combat violence against women. Foreign assistance resources also supported UNICEF's ongoing work to combat child trafficking.

Tolerance of GBV in Benin is linked to the low status of women and a lack of awareness about their rights. This combines with cultural factors to discourage women and families from recognizing GBV as an issue and addressing it. As a result, women are unlikely to seek outside intervention for all but the most serious cases. Women are often unwilling to file a formal complaint for fear of reprisal, including divorce, loss of financial support, and possible estrangement from their family and children. The WJEI program has three distinct but related components: raising awareness of women's rights and GBV, providing support to victims, and strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and the judicial system to respond to GBV. Foreign assistance resources support the first two components in Benin.

Intensive media campaigns and community-based facilitators served to raise awareness of women's rights and the need to combat GBV. In FY 2009, 2,838 volunteer community facilitators were trained in community mobilization against GBV. Over 300,000 people were directly mobilized on women's rights and GBV through local conferences and workshops, interactive radio discussions, and home visits. Over 2,300 media events with anti-GBV messages were produced, reaching over two million people throughout Benin through radio and television programs, panel and group discussions, and newspaper and journal articles published in French and local languages.

In addition, 1,874 GBV victims received psychosocial and legal counseling, health services, and assistance for other basic needs. Results significantly surpassed targets, as the awareness raising activities have greatly increased the demand for victim services. USG-supported activities are virtually the only ones to provide services for GBV victims. WJEI will continue to strengthen the GOB's social service centers to improve victim support services and provide longer-term support to victims and their families. The activity will also assist the Ministry of the Family to manage information on GBV cases and improve services through an institutional mapping exercise and database development for case tracking and referral.

USG resources have also supported raising awareness of Benin's 2006 anti-child-trafficking law. More recently, the activity has facilitated the drafting of cross-border agreements to repatriate trafficked children from Gabon and the Congo, and developed an action plan to implement a cross-border agreement with Nigeria. It has also worked with transporters in northern Benin to develop and adopt a code of conduct. Over 1,000 copies of this code were distributed to taxi and transport drivers in the northern region of the country, and more than 300 drivers have signed commitments not to transport children they suspect are being trafficked. Over 100,000 people to date have been directly sensitized about the dangers of child trafficking through interactive radio programs in local languages, village level conferences, group discussions, and door-to-door interviews.

Interventions in FY 2009 focused on combating child trafficking in Benin's northern departments, which have some of the lowest social and economic indicators, making families and children increasingly vulnerable to traffickers. Four USG-supported transit centers opened in the northern region to facilitate victim recovery and reintegration. Public and media denouncement of child trafficking in the north has opened discussion of trafficking and increased community vigilance. Of

the 1,104 intercepted children served by the transit centers, approximately 60 percent have been successfully reintegrated into their communities and families.