

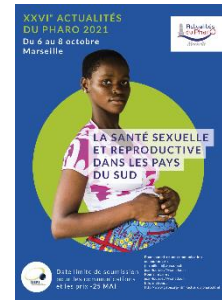
Actualités du Pharo 2021 – Session 3

10 years of the French Muskoka Fund - review and outlook

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For the past 10 years, the French Muskoka Fund (FFM) has been working to improve the health and well-being of women, newborns, children and adolescents in nine countries in West and Central Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

Based on an innovative coordination mechanism maximizing the mandates of four UN agencies (WHO, UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF), the MFF implements High Impact Interventions (HII) based on a multi-sectoral approach for an effective and sustainable response.

In the area of sexual and reproductive health, MFF interventions include

- the development of community-based services
- provision of comprehensive modern contraceptive supplies,
- information on family planning and gender issues through awareness-raising activities via various channels (radio, TV, community campaigns, social mobilisation)
- setting up sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, in schools and out-of-school settings and developing comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), and
- raising awareness of gender-based violence and gender inequality.

Despite a difficult context, the MFF has achieved remarkable results over the past 10 years.

Here are a few examples in the area of sexual and reproductive health more specifically:

- In Côte d'Ivoire, the MFF has contributed to the dissemination and supervision of ECS courses for 71.4% of new secondary school students, as well as the adoption of a national reference document on menstrual health and hygiene.
- In Togo, the prevalence of modern contraception increased from 16.3% in 2012 to 23.2% in 2017. The success has been such that the Togolese Ministry of Health has developed a Strategic Plan for Community-based Interventions.

However, the testimonies of our beneficiaries remain the most eloquent. For example, this message from Roubatou Tchagaou, a pupil in Togo: "At the youth centre, they taught me that I have rights and that at 15, I was not yet old enough to get married. They taught me my rights, which I didn't know. What I knew at home was submission. Now we are going to get married when the time is right. It is no longer a forced marriage or an early marriage. And thanks to the centre, we are going to fight unwanted pregnancies.