

Women's Savings Groups for Better Reproductive Health in Bénin

In Southern Bénin, Grameen Foundation and local partners have helped hundreds of women's savings groups implement health savings plans. Now, we are engaging those same groups in Family Planning education to empower rural women and their husbands to make decisions that best fit their individual and

family needs. We aim to advance opportunities for 12,000 rural people to make choices about their sexual and reproductive health based on greater access to information, contraceptive services and health financing tools—and to contribute to Bénin's goal of increasing its national contraceptive prevalence rate to 20%.

Family Planning Education

- > Conducted formative research of target communities' family planning knowledge, attitudes, practices and barriers to inform program and education design.
- > Trained six primary trainers to build capacity of 250 voluntary community agents to deliver family planning information.
- > Education consists of seven 15-minute, interactive and dialogue-based sessions. Husbands join savings group members to receive final, review session. (12/2018 Goal: 480 groups)

Gender Dialogues

- > Field tested gender dialogues/stories field and trained 6 trainers to share with communities.
- > Conducted group discussions with women, men and community leaders to address family planning myths, misconceptions and concerns.
- > Goals include greater support, particularly from men, and increased dialogue between husbands and wives on family planning.

Linkages with Health Providers

- > Trained local partner managers and facilitators to design partnerships with public and private health providers.
- > 60+ partnerships with health providers; discounts negotiated for savings group members.
- > Health provider partners report more timely access and at times visit groups to complement education messages.

Health Savings and Health Loans

- > Through Grameen's foundational Healthy Savings Program, the savings groups have been saving for health, on average, 15 cents per week per woman. 670 women's groups have saved a combined \$39,000 for health-related issues.
- > Savings groups have granted more than 2,000 health loans, averaging US\$9 each.
 - » 48% of health loans were used for children.
 - » 46% were used for malaria—of those, 45% were for children under 5 years or for pregnant women.



Women's Savings Groups

- > Engaged 300 saving groups, reaching 7,500 women in poor, rural villages (12/2018 Goal = 480 groups / 12,000 women).
- > Trained 250 voluntary community agents, providing tools, recognition and support to facilitate savings groups.



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