



## PHOTO & CAPTION

### A Community Tackles Infant Mortality



Photo: USAID/Mary Cobb

***Midwife Bintou Ndour, right, shows a fellow staff member how to use the Ziguinchor District Health Center's new warming table for newborn babies.***

For every 100 Senegalese babies born, six die before their first birthday. Although this rate is an improvement over the past, it is still too high. USAID, the Government of Senegal, and local communities are working together to change that. At the District Health Center in Ziguinchor, a local health committee has just bought a warming table for newborn babies and, with USAID support, is starting to train all its nurses in essential newborn care techniques.

“This is the first time we have had a tool to warm babies,” said midwife Bintou Ndour. A local carpenter made the table, copying it from a photo of a table built for a USAID project elsewhere. USAID encourages communities that received training assistance to contribute to newborn survival efforts by supplying warming tables. The Ziguinchor health committee jumped at the chance to help, and commissioned the carpenter to build the table.

Newborn care ranges from basic pre- and post-natal preventive care to resuscitating babies and managing infections. After a USAID-supported pilot activity in nearby Kebemer District proved successful, Senegal's government approved a package of essential newborn services to be available nationally. One of those services — medical personnel training — is already available in nine districts.

“Ziguinchor picks up technology faster than other regions,” said Matar Camara, a USAID child survival specialist. “This community already made an investment to improve newborn survival, even though they had just learned about the project and training.”

Madame Sao, president of the health committee, smiled humbly as committee members, midwives, and USAID representatives applauded her and admired the new table. “We are collecting user fees to improve healthcare. This money belongs to the patients of the center and we wanted to give them back something that will improve their health,” she said.