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SENEGAL

SUCCESS STORY

Rural Health Huts Provide Crucial Care

Accessible, village-level services boost health of women and children



Photo: CCF/ Solene Eclouard-Blink

Patricia Awa Sarr (left) consults community health worker Coutaye Samb in the health hut in Sinthiou Mbadane village after recovering from her bout with malaria.

“The project has helped my community have drugs and insecticide-treated mosquito nets when needed, which facilitates our health care and gives us means to prevent malaria,” said Patricia Awa Sarr, who received services at a USAID-funded health hut.

Telling Our Story
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Patricia Awa Sarr contracted malaria, but she was lucky. In another place and time, she would have been forced to walk for hours with a high fever or to hail a donkey cart for the sandy trek to the district health post.

Now, she needed only enough strength to reach the health hut in her village of Sinthiou Mbadane, where a qualified volunteer community health worker diagnosed and treated her. “The project has helped my community have drugs and insecticide-treated mosquito nets when needed, which facilitates our health care and gives us means to prevent malaria,” said Patricia, a 28-year-old pastor’s wife and mother of four

Bringing health care to remote villages improves the lives of mothers and children, which is why USAID has made it a main focus of its health activities in this West African country. To improve access to basic health services, USAID and its partners implemented a community-based health program in three rural districts in the Mbour Department. They set up 140 health huts and worked with the local population to select volunteer community health workers. In total, 1,300 health workers birth attendants were trained so that mothers and children can access a wide array of health services right in their community, ranging from the treatment of malaria, respiratory illnesses and wounds to preventive services, such as growth monitoring and disease prevention.

In addition, USAID and its partners encourage nurses from the nearby towns to pay monthly visits to each health hut to offer services such as immunization, prenatal and postnatal consultations, and other services the volunteer community health workers are not trained to provide.

“Before receiving care at our health hut, diseases like malaria, diarrhea, and acute respiratory infections often claimed the lives of children and even adults,” said Ndèye Niang from Ndiarmew village. But such complications are becoming fewer as many health services are now available right where people live. This and other similar USAID-funded programs were so successful that USAID has now begun supporting such activities in 27 districts in five of Senegal’s regions.