

Evidence to Inform Social and Behavior Change for Family Planning in Francophone West Africa

Breakthrough RESEARCH's suite of research activities in francophone West Africa aims to build the evidence base on the extent to which various approaches address behavioral determinants and improve family planning (FP) and reproductive health (RH) outcomes. This brief summarizes how Breakthrough RESEARCH is creating a body of knowledge on social and behavior change (SBC).

Francophone West Africa has the highest fertility rates in the world and low contraceptive prevalence. In 2011, nine governments of francophone West African countries, along with technical and financial partners, formed the Ouagadougou Partnership (OP) to accelerate progress in the use of FP services in the region. Since then, country governments, donors, and technical partners have worked to strengthen FP/RH programs, predominantly through investments in procurement and supply of commodities and improved service delivery. SBC interventions, however, have received less investment.

USAID'S SBC INVESTMENTS IN FRANCOPHONE WEST AFRICA

West Africa Breakthrough ACTION (WABA) is a regional initiative funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). It aims to increase coordination and effectiveness of SBC interventions in four countries: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, and Togo. WABA works in partnership with Amplify-FP, another USAID-funded project, to strengthen service delivery in these four countries. These investments provide an entry point for Breakthrough RESEARCH to explore the SBC programmatic landscape within the region and identify and document the effectiveness of SBC approaches.

Breakthrough RESEARCH, the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) flagship SBC research project, aims to build the evidence base on the effectiveness of SBC interventions in francophone West Africa, with a focus on the West Africa Breakthrough ACTION (WABA) countries: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, and Togo. This brief summarizes Breakthrough RESEARCH's work with FP/RH stakeholders in the region to strengthen SBC measurement and conduct targeted evaluations of USAID SBC investments in FP/RH.

PROVIDER BEHAVIOR CHANGE LANDSCAPE REVIEW

Provider behavior change (PBC) interventions go beyond clinical training and support such as technical job aids. It seeks to positively influence provider behavior to improve the quality of services, enhance client experiences, increase demand for services, and increase uptake of commodities or adoption of healthy behaviors. Breakthrough RESEARCH reviewed the landscape of available evidence and prepared a report recommending programmatic investments and possible research avenues. The goal of the recommendations is to address challenges and opportunities related to PBC interventions for improving FP/RH services in the OP countries.



ACTIVITY SNAPSHOT

Evidence to Inform Social and Behavior Change for Family Planning in Francophone West Africa

BREAKTHROUGH RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

Population Council (lead), Tulane University, Avenir Health, ideas42, Population Reference Bureau, and the Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University

COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Ministries of Health of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, and Togo, Breakthrough ACTION, Amplify-FP, and in-country research institutions

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

August 2019 – August 2022

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, and Togo

CONTACT

Leanne Dougherty
ldougherty@popcouncil.org

This report is intended for PBC program designers and implementers, as well as global and regional donors of related programs. Breakthrough RESEARCH synthesized both published and grey literature, with additional insights gathered from informational interviews with participants in projects that are piloting PBC approaches. The report also presents current or recent PBC interventions in OP countries that have not been formally evaluated.

For more information. *Provider Behavior Change Approaches to Improve Family Planning Services in the Ouagadougou Partnership Countries: A Landscaping Review*, <https://breakthroughactionandresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/PBC-Landscaping-FP-OP.pdf>.

MASS MEDIA LITERATURE REVIEW

Breakthrough RESEARCH, with partner Tulane University, undertook a literature review of research on mass and digital media and FP among young people in francophone West Africa. This review documents available evidence of mass

and digital media's impacts on FP outcomes. It also notes areas where more robust evaluation is needed.

The review includes both published and grey literature, as well as programmatic experiences and information from a select number of interviews with key informants. The lessons learned are primarily from the OP countries, but also draw from communications initiatives across Africa and elsewhere.

This review is intended for global and regional donors and FP program designers and implementers, particularly in francophone West Africa. The recommendations relate to the design and implementation of mass and digital media communications strategies and to increasing the evidence base for the effectiveness of these programs, particularly on young populations.

For more information. *Family Planning and Youth in West Africa: Mass media, digital media, and social and behavior change communication strategies*, <https://breakthroughactionandresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Mass-Media-Literature-Review.pdf>.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND COST ANALYSIS OF THE MERCI MON HÉROS CAMPAIGN

Merci Mon Héros (MMH, Thank You My Hero) is a Breakthrough ACTION-implemented mass media campaign targeting youth and adults, with the aim of promoting an environment conducive to young people's access to FP/RH services in the four WABA countries. The youth-led campaign is releasing videos via social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, as well as more traditional channels, such as television, radio, community screening events, youth groups, and others. Breakthrough RESEARCH, with partner Tulane University, is assessing MMH through three separate activities: (1) social listening monitoring, (2) qualitative performance analysis, and (3) cost analysis. The results of these activities will inform adaptive management of MMH, as well as future related programs. These activities will be complemented with routine monitoring surveys conducted by Breakthrough ACTION during the campaign.

For more information. Merci Mon Héros, YouTube https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLfIIHdtzuE_E4s-UlaMm7hwqNy8z0WykhN; Twitter: @MerciMonHeros, Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mercimonheros/>, Instagram: @MerciMonHeros; and <https://spark.adobe.com/page/oqbelmPi1p4Ej/>.

Monitoring MMH Audience Conversations Through Social Listening

Social listening entails gathering data from social media and other online sources using an algorithm to classify and code online content. The MMH evaluation is using this technique to monitor online communications and provide insights about intervention focus areas specifically related to youth, sexuality, and intergenerational communication, as well as rapid feedback loops about campaign engagement and reactions to particular videos.

Breakthrough ACTION is using Breakthrough RESEARCH's social listening baseline report to identify themes, such as the role of gender and partner communication, to incorporate into new campaign videos. The social listening monitoring reports have also informed MMH strategy. For example, one finding from the social listening report indicated the campaign was reaching mainly youth and younger adults (ages 18-34), but not the older adults who are a critical audience for inspiring intergenerational communication to break taboos in discussing reproductive health. In response, youth leaders created an additional six online videos specifically oriented towards adults.

► **Forthcoming products.** Findings from the social listening reports will be summarized in the MMH evaluation report (December 2020). A separate brief detailing the methodological approach will be shared to inform future social media campaign monitoring efforts (September 2020).

Qualitative Performance Evaluation of the MMH Campaign

Breakthrough RESEARCH's qualitative performance evaluation of the MMH campaign will contribute to the body of SBC evidence in two ways: (1) by providing context-specific insights into the underlying conditions that support adult/youth communication and (2) by determining the most significant changes in the communities exposed to the media campaign in Niger and Cote d'Ivoire. The results will be shared with Breakthrough ACTION, local partners, and government stakeholders for consideration and adaptation in future youth engagement programs.

► **Forthcoming products.** Findings from the qualitative evaluation will be summarized in the MMH evaluation report (December 2020).

Cost Analysis of the MMH Campaign

Breakthrough RESEARCH partner Avenir Health is undertaking a cost analysis to calculate the financial and economic costs of MMH using Breakthrough RESEARCH's *Guidelines for Costing of Social and Behavior Change Interventions*.

► **Forthcoming products.** Avenir Health's findings will be summarized in the MMH cost-effectiveness report (December 2020).

For more information. *Guidelines for Costing of Social and Behavior Change Interventions*, <https://breakthroughactionandresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/guidelines-for-costing-sbc-interventions.pdf>; *The Added Value of Costing Social & Behavior Change Interventions*, <https://breakthroughactionandresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Costing-Brief.pdf>.

ENGAGING MEN FOR EFFECTIVE FAMILY PLANNING THROUGH COUPLE COMMUNICATION

The [Maternal and Child Survival Project](#) (MCSP) implemented three couple communication approaches on FP in Togo's Koto district. Breakthrough RESEARCH, together with the [Institute for Reproductive Health](#), assessed two of these approaches: in-home counseling and group discussions. The goal was to assess the benefits and feasibility of these two approaches for increasing FP acceptability and uptake as well as to determine which elements of each are best suited for roll-out on a broader scale.

The resulting case study explores how the two couple communication approaches influence pathways and decision-making associated with FP/RH behaviors for participating couples and describes the experiences and behaviors of service providers and community health workers (CHWs) in conducting the couple communication activities. The case study also explores potential behavior changes among couples, as well as among providers and CHWs.

For more information. *Engaging Men for Effective Family Planning through Couple Communication: An Assessment of Two MCSP Couple Communication Approaches in Togo*, <https://breakthroughactionandresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Engaging-men-for-effective-FP-Togo.pdf>.

STRENGTHENING MEASUREMENT OF SBC FP/RH PROGRAMS IN FRANCOPHONE WEST AFRICA

Breakthrough RESEARCH has undertaken a mapping of FP investments, technical approaches, and indicators in order to identify indicator gaps and make recommendations to governments, donors, researchers, and implementers to improve measurement of SBC activities within the broader FP programmatic landscape. Researchers conducted structured interviews with FP stakeholders in each country and collected documentation, including program descriptions, monitor-

ing-evaluation and learning plans, and indicator reference sheets. The team analyzed these data by creating a matrix with 1,508 indicators from 55 stakeholder/projects. This matrix formed the basis for heat maps by type of indicator and socio-ecological level. Heat maps were initially created for all indicators, followed by SBC-specific indicators.

Several SBC monitoring and evaluation recommendations emerged from this work that could be applied to current and planned FP and SBC programs in francophone West Africa. For example, findings from the report led to recommendations that donors coordinate with partners nationally and regionally to facilitate the standardization of SBC indicators and to ensure that SBC-related measures are routinely monitored. The report also encouraged data utilization by adopting approaches that translate complex data into dashboards, data maps, and visualizations that help to communicate findings to lay audiences.

For more information. *Strengthening Social and Behavior Change Monitoring and Evaluation for Family Planning in Francophone West Africa: Technical Report*, <http://breakthroughactionandresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/WABA-FP-IndicatorMapping-Report.pdf>; *Strengthening Social and Behavior Change Monitoring and Evaluation for Family Planning in Francophone West Africa: Programmatic Research Brief*, <http://breakthroughactionandresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/WABA-FP-IndicatorMapping-Brief.pdf>

RESEARCH UTILIZATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Breakthrough RESEARCH, with partner Population Reference Bureau, is dedicated to ensuring that the knowledge generated from our francophone West Africa activities is communicated to the right audiences in the right formats to inform their decisionmaking and to encourage the uptake and effectiveness of SBC programs in the region. Breakthrough RESEARCH works closely with Breakthrough ACTION and other projects to ensure that information flows smoothly in both directions and that results are organized, conveyed, and applied in ways that maximize reach and impact.

As a research project, Breakthrough RESEARCH publishes findings in academic journals, but also publicizes results in easily digestible programmatic briefs, blogs, webinars, and slide decks targeted towards donors, program implementers, and other stakeholders.

Findings from Breakthrough RESEARCH's francophone West Africa activities have been presented at regional meetings, including the Ouagadougou Partnership Annual Meeting, and will be shared through global virtual and in-person channels, including webinars, discussions on Springboard for SBC, blog posts, a Breakthrough ACTION Insights presentation, and other joint Breakthrough RESEARCH and Breakthrough ACTION events.

Breakthrough RESEARCH

This activity is being implemented as part of Breakthrough RESEARCH. Breakthrough RESEARCH catalyzes social and behavior change (SBC) by conducting state-of-the-art research and evaluation and promoting evidence-based solutions to improve health and development programs around the world. Breakthrough RESEARCH is a consortium led by the Population Council in partnership with Avenir Health, ideas42, Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University, Population Reference Bureau, and Tulane University.

Acknowledgements

Breakthrough RESEARCH is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of cooperative agreement no. AID-OAA-A-17-00018. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Breakthrough RESEARCH and Population Council and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Breakthrough RESEARCH

Population Council
4301 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 280
Washington, DC 20008
Tel: +1 202 237 9400
breakthroughactionandresearch.org

Photo Credit

© U.Ozel.Images / Getty Images