



Leadership Development Program Empowers Women in Côte d'Ivoire

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Align and mobilize women around a common goal to address the challenges of impoverishment in our community



Photo: Management Sciences for Health

The women of the association Sigui-Diguiya in the vegetable garden they created thanks to the application of LDP+ practices.

We were starting to be discouraged. We were about to give up when I was selected to take advantage of the Leadership Development Program. After my participation in the first two LDP+ workshops, it was as if I had been illuminated ... Thanks to MSH for its technical assistance.

— Mrs. Kouakou, member of the improvement team of the Gbêkê Health Region

The Leadership Development Program (LDP+) is an experiential approach developed by Management Sciences for Health (MSH).

The program enables individuals at all levels of an organization to develop the skills they need to lead, manage, and govern programs; meet challenges; and achieve measurable desired results. LDP+ learners participate in a series of trainings and work as a team for six to eight months to create a shared vision and implement an action plan to address the real challenges in their workplace.

In Côte d'Ivoire, this approach—called the LMG approach—is funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. This project aims to improve the health system by strengthening the leadership, management, and governance capacity health officers from 9 regional directorates and 32 departmental directorates.

Mrs. Kouakou Yeo Alimata, a state Graduate Nurse in the Gbêkê Health Region, is one of the 195 staff of the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene trained to date in leadership, management, and governance practices.

Although the program was originally designed for health workers, most recipients do not hesitate to use their newfound leadership practices to meet challenges in their community or in personal life. This is the case of Mrs. Kouakou, who after being trained worked to help the members of the association of her neighborhood.

When Mrs. Kouakou and the women in her neighborhood formed their association, the goal was to improve social cohesion and mutual aid. Their ambition was to create income-generating activities to make some of them financially independent. Among their projects was the creation of a vegetable garden so they could sell the produce. However, the difficulties they faced, including insufficient stakeholder mobilization and water scarcity in the city, discouraged them from continuing.

“We were starting to be discouraged. We were about to give up when I was selected to take advantage of the Leadership Development Program. After my participation in the first two LDP+ workshops, it was as if I had been illuminated ... because I was convinced that we had found the key to our success. I first mobilized the members of the board and then we mobilized all the members of the association around our common vision. I made them understand that our difficulties were only challenges and that as we reflect together, we will find ways to overcome them. From then on, we became a real team where everyone felt involved and important to contribute to advance.”

Today, thanks to the leadership, the woman of the association Sigui-Djiguiya are autonomous and blooming.