

The Positive Deviance Approach and Nutrition Rehabilitation Activities in Mali:

Save the Children U.S.A., Mali. Sikasso Field Office, Bougouni.

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Name of Project, Funding Sources, Dates, Overall Goals and Objectives:

The Bougouni office was opened in 1996 and funded by a USAID grant aimed at improving child survival in the region. All activities were community based and include:

- Child immunization
- Diarrhea control
- Nutrition
 1. Vitamin A supplementation
 2. Growth monitoring and
 3. Nutrition demonstrations
- Family planning
- Malaria control

This grant lasted until 1998 when the program was continued under another USAID grant. This “umbrella grant” is a more general funding and also includes funding of activities aimed at improving youth health.

Nutrition activities were started in 1996 at program inception. Two animators were hired for each village and programmatic activities were begun. Analysis of the growth monitoring data showed that there was a high prevalence of malnutrition (PEM). Furthermore, continued analysis of the data indicated that the nutrition demonstrations were not significantly alleviating the problem. It was decided that the Positive Deviance Approach would be utilized with the goal of reducing the prevalence of infant malnutrition with the hope that a sustained reduction in malnutrition would lead to a reduction of childhood mortality.

Monique Sternin was contracted as a consultant and arrived in March of 1999. Two villages were chosen for experimentation and PD activities were started in September of that year and continued until April of 2000. Siaka Kontate was chosen to facilitate the activities at the village level.

Vanessa Conrad arrived in the summer of 2000 to conduct an evaluation of the results of the year-long experimentation. A significant difference between the 2 intervention villages and 2 control villages was observed in terms of infant nutrition status.

A regional workshop was arranged for November of 2000 in Bamako to share the results of this experience in Mali and other countries in the region also using the approach.

The following year, a regional seminar on PD was held in Senegal (November of 2001). During this seminar, Monique Sternin, and Serigne Diene conducted a training seminar with MOH officials and regional and international NGO's. In addition, eight new villages in the Bougouni district were selected for implementation of PD nutrition in 2001. A training seminar was held with all the animators, community health workers, supervisors, and other interested parties who would facilitate the PD activities in the eight villages. All FARN activities in these villages were finished in Dec. of 2001.

PD activities were planned for 8 new villages in 2002 as well. However, activities were started in only 6 new villages as 2 of the 2001 villages were reselected for FARN activities in 2002. During this summer I am evaluating the success of the eight villages that utilized the approach in 2001 both in terms of gains in nutritional status and of sustainability of those gains.

Unfortunately, program funding will change this year too. Animators and their supervisors in the health sector will no longer be funded. This will eliminate the cadre of workers who facilitated the PD activities at the village level and will necessitate that a new strategy be implemented for PD activities to continue. It

is felt that given the current level of resources, PD activities could not be continued in the same manner. However, an experimentation using PD at the institutional level is planned. This intervention will seek to transfer successful behaviors between CSCom's (village health centers). For example, one CSCom has an excellent record on vaccination coverage while another has a poor vaccination record yet a very strong record for prenatal visits. The same CSCom with the strong record in vaccination happens to have a weak record in prenatal visits. These two centers could share the strategies that enable each of them to have particular success in the different areas.

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Partners and their roles:

Ministry of Health of Mali – Provides general political support as well as technical assistance.

BASIC's – Funding of regional workshop

HKI - Documentation consultation

Training Materials:

-West African PD training manual (in process of translation into French)

-Rapport sur la consultation 15 Mars – 31 Mars, 1999

-Rapport sur l'attalier November 2000

-Rapport sur 8 village 2001 (This evaluation was completed by the Bougouni field staff and these same 8 villages are being evaluated and reported on by Guy Koppe of Tufts University during summer 2002).