



### Background

Guinea's maternal and child health indicators are among the lowest in the world. Even before Ebola hit in 2014, trust and confidence in its health services were low. Ebola's rapid spread further fueled fear and distrust, with many people believing health workers themselves spread the disease. Guinea's current population of 10.6 million is growing at a 3.1 percent annual rate. Life expectancy is 59 years, indicating a heavy disease burden. According to recent surveillance data, health services in more than 30 health districts are underutilized, especially in areas where Ebola hit hardest. This is due to a lack of quality services and limited confidence in the health system.

As the country continues to recover from Ebola, the Health Communication Capacity Collaborative (HC3) is working with Guinea's hardest hit communities to rebuild both trust in the health system and the quality of care delivered. This series of case studies examines some of HC3's activities and tools that were part of an overall social and behavior change communication (SBCC) strategy to improve health behaviors and increase the demand for and use of quality reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health (RMNCH) services in Guinea.

### Using Radio to Promote Health Services

Radio has wide reach in Guinea and was a key channel used to expand participation in HC3's community dialogues. As an important and trusted source of information, especially in remote and rural areas, radio reaches all corners of Guinea, in French and local languages. To implement its radio program, HC3 worked with 38 stations in Conakry and the rural areas.

Before launching the program, HC3 held a workshop in Kindia in October 2015 with partners and local radio stations. Workshop participants helped develop a guide that featured a variety of formats to be used, including 30- or 60-second public service announcements, talk shows and interactive call-in programs. Another popular format used was a community game show called "Les Jeux Publique" that aired live on radio.

Starting with coverage of the HC3-supported community dialogues, radio helped multiply the number of people who heard about these discussions being held at health service sites. Community dialogues with health providers and facility staff revealed the communities' concerns and frustrations about their local health services.



*A Les Jeux Publique community event in Guinea.*

Journalists and producers at the radio stations used the guide to create programming about antenatal care, hygiene, well-baby visits, family planning and other health topics. Radio programs also encouraged the community to use health services, while promoting quality improvement programs at facilities, such as the “Gold Star” accredited ones. And they publicized rapid rehabilitations at facilities and Gold Star site launches that featured local celebrations to help promote quality services. The programs aired in nine local languages in addition to French.

“*Since Ebola, all of us were afraid to go to the health facility. In my family, no one was allowed to go to any health facility. Today’s event motivated us. Since the messages are clear, I will pass them to my neighbors.*”

**Meme Keleban**  
Local Chief from N’Zérékoré

HC3 partnered with the Union of Independent Radio and Television Stations of Guinea or URTELGUI to broadcast RMNCH messages on additional stations nationwide.

In partnership with local health officials, Rural Radio of N’Zérékoré and Yalenzou Health Center, HC3 helped launch *Les Jeux Publique*, an innovative and interactive format that engaged the community in a live game show to promote the benefits of service use. Women from the community were asked questions about local health services as well as basic health information. Guinean communities considered it a great honor to host these events, where men and women were exposed to consistent health messaging. The game shows often included an entertainment-education component that allowed people to learn through dancing and singing.

## Results

Partnering with local radio stations was an effective way to reach Guineans with clear and consistent health messages. The radio program, along with HC3’s other

“*I was very happy to attend this “Jeux Publique” program. I gained a lot of information regarding the services provided by the health center this evening. Back in my community, I will advocate to women to always bring their children for immunization in the health center in order to avoid several diseases.*”

**Agatte Gomou**  
Housewife from Maferinya

SBCC activities, has led to an increase in use of health facilities in Guinea. Data will be gathered and evaluated later in 2017 to determine the exact rates of increase and the impact of the radio programs.

The radio program offered the Ministry of Health and its partners a cost effective way to reach millions of people with consistent messages in local languages. Bringing live radio directly to the community, as in the radio game show, directly involved and motivated the community to be active participants in their health decisions. The radio game show also increased the communities’ desire to learn more about health.

## About HC3

HC3 is a five-year, global SBCC project funded by USAID from October 2012 until September 2017. The project is designed to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to implement state-of-the-art SBCC programs. The Ebola emergency response and the post-Ebola recovery response are among the important health areas addressed by HC3.

HC3 is supporting the Government of Guinea, U.S. Government implementing partners and local SBCC professionals to design, produce and implement a package of high-quality SBCC interventions to encourage Guineans to use their local health centers and improve associated behaviors.

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