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Youth Champion, ABPF

## Partnering with young people as champions in sexual rights and abortion access



# Abortion Environment in Benin



✦ Abortion is legally accessible under the following conditions.

Life or the health in danger, fetal malformation and rape and incest

Unsafe abortion with most of the private “clinics”

Abortion service is available in public facilities but highly stigmatized

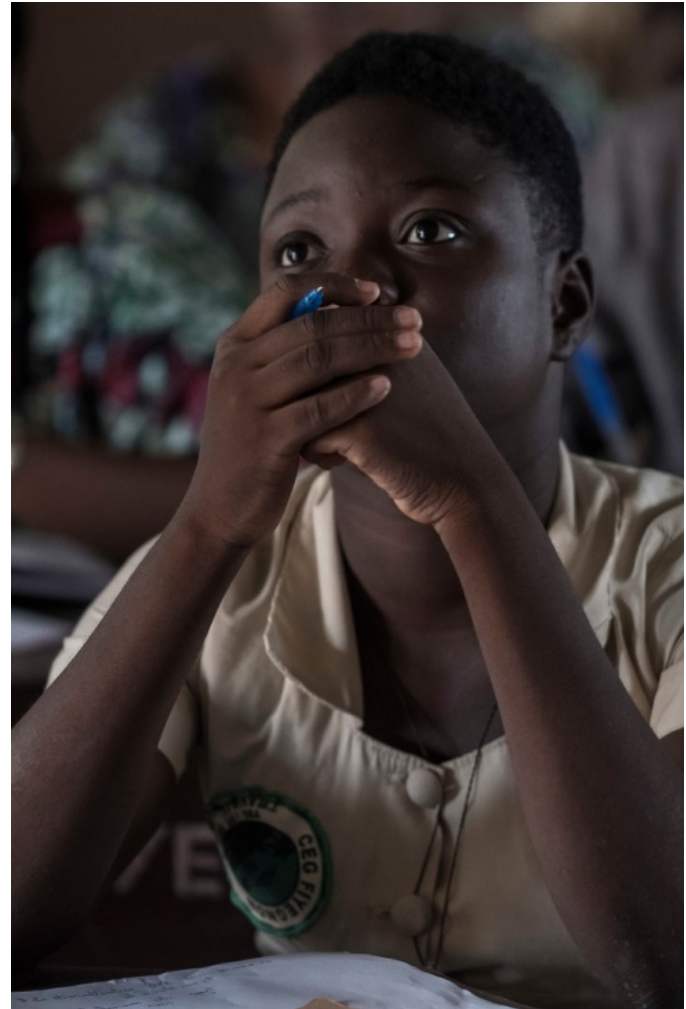
- Unaffordable by youth due to the cost and social stigma

# Stigmatizing attitudes, beliefs and actions scale (SABAS)

- Maternal mortality is 351 per 100,000 live births
- 15% of maternal deaths are due to abortion.
- (SABAS - Shellenberg, 2014)
- 84% of respondents have a negative perception of abortion and they do not favour access to safe abortion services
- **In 2018, 31% of respondents supported the exclusion and discrimination of women who have abortion compared to 21% in 2016 and 41% in 2014.**

# Youth project

- Youth are the most active sexually (before 15 years old)
- They face double stigma (pregnancy and abortion) from adults
- Adults don't recognize youth sexuality
- They need a safe space to request abortion
- Need of confident person to understand their choice and direct them



# Strategies implemented

- Youth champion strategy: training Youth Action Movement (YAM) members and referring their peers
- Peer to peer orientation of young people on the use of non-stigmatizing languages in the community



# Great achievements

218 YAM activists are strengthened and engaged on:

- ❖ the development of non-stigmatizing messages on abortion
- ❖ the use of social networks to break the silence surrounding abortion
- ❖ The use of images adapted to communicate on abortion



## Youth Action Movement members conducting outreach activities in schools, with students and teachers



## YAM members conducting sessions for young people out of school



# Strategies implemented

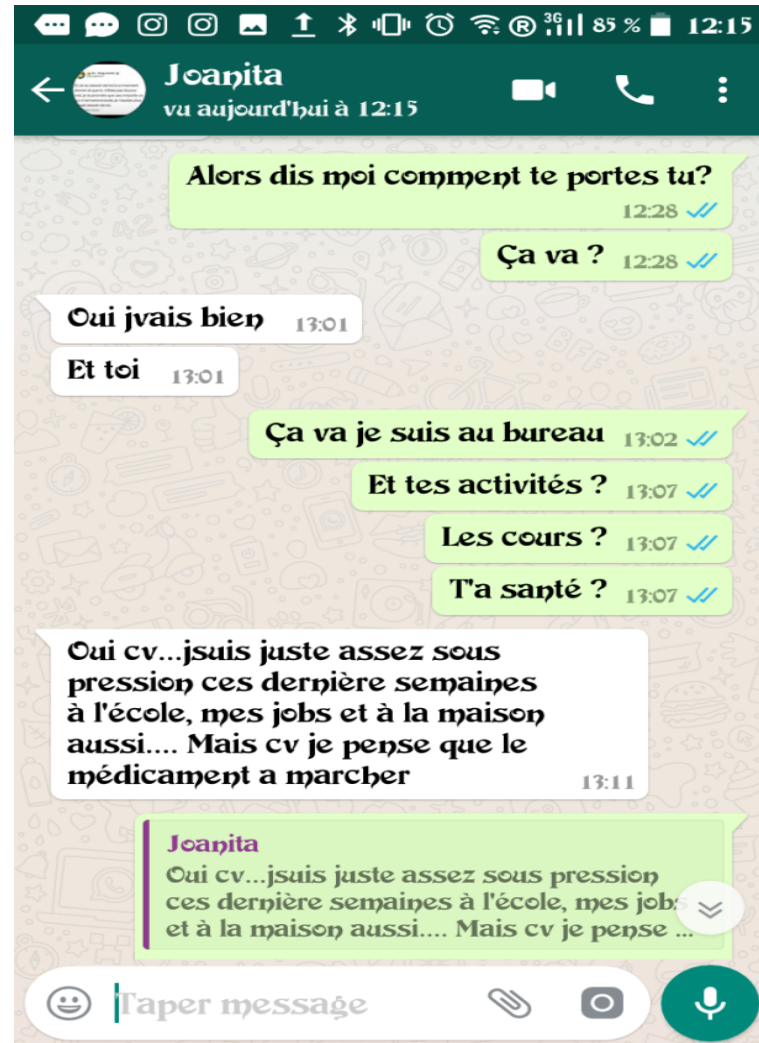
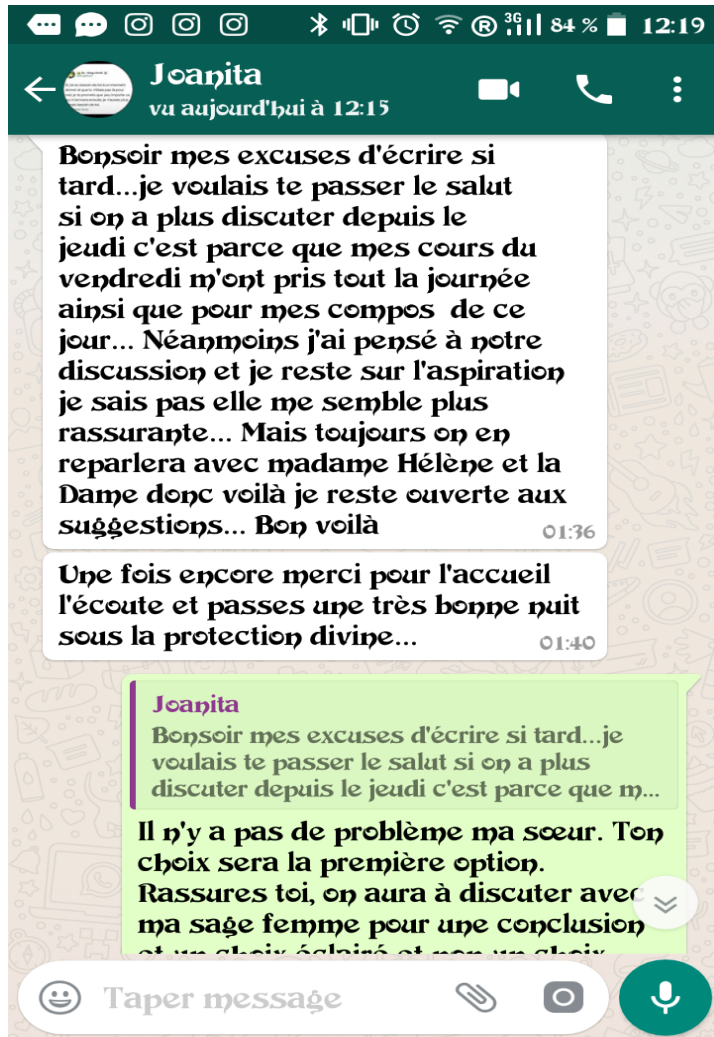
Articles/blogs writing competition on abortion stigma within Youth Action Movement (YAM)

Online chat and live via Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp

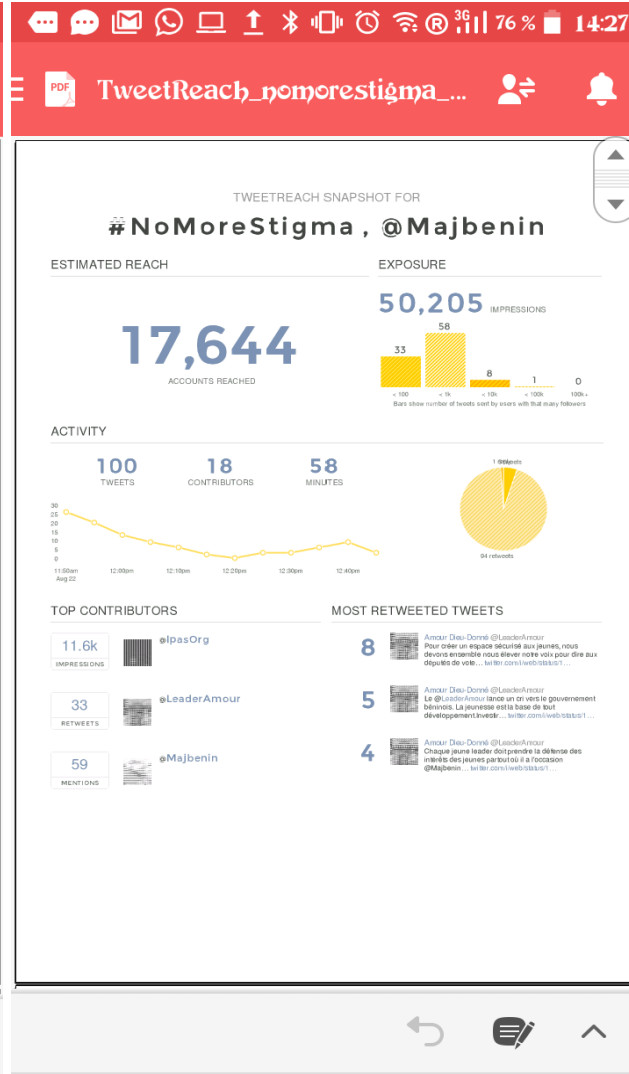




# Great Achievements



# Story file



Online conferences (tweet up) reached 840,138 accounts and sparked 1,139,660 reactions / impressions with the hashtag #NoMoreStigma

# Great Achievements (Testimonies)



*Elèves : « Actuellement la loi sur l'avortement dans le pays ne cadre pas avec les réalités sociales de nos jours »*

**The current abortion law doesn't match with our social realities**



*Prof A: je pense que le gouvernement doit œuvrer pour la légalisation de la loi sur l'avortement afin d'éviter les décès liés à l'avortement au sein des jeunes*

**The government should work for the legalization of the abortion law to avoid unsafe abortion related deaths among young people,**



*Prof B: je souhaite qu'il y ait des centres spécialisés et agréés par le gouvernement pour offrir les services sécurisés d'avortement aux personnes désireuses quel que soit les conditions afin de mieux contrôler les cas d'avortement,*

**I wish the government identified facilities where safe abortion could be provided in its safe way**

# FOR or AGAINST Abortion



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# Perspective

- ❖ Increase youth participation and training on abortion
- ❖ Break silence among religious leaders
- ❖ Expand actions to others CSO to establish a national network
- ❖ Advocates for the laws decree signature

# Lessons Learnt

- ❖ Breaking the silence surrounding abortion facilitates access to safe abortion services by girls and women
- ❖ Abortion is perceived negatively when it comes to be discussed in public but the service demand keeps increasing
- ❖ Partnering with youth is a key strategy to reach young people while addressing abortion stigma

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