

# EMPOWERING YOUTH AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO PROMOTE YOUTH SEXUAL RIGHTS AND ACCESS IN TOGO

## Country context



- Population:** 7.8m: 40% under 15 years old
- Total fertility rate:** 4.8 children
- Early pregnancy:** 17% of young people gave birth before age 18
- Unmet need for modern contraception:** 34%; married women aged 15-49 using modern contraception: 17%
- HIV/AIDS:** knowledge - girls-23% / boys-31%; never been tested - girls-60% and boys-81%
- GBV:** since age 15, 29% of women have been physically abused

## Problem

- ▶ **Early pregnancies** - leading cause of death of 15-19-year-olds and of infants, plus social exclusion and discrimination
- ▶ **Limited youth-friendly SRH services** - unsafe abortions, maternal mortality, obstetric fistula, STIs, HIV/AIDS
- ▶ **Poor family communication about sexuality** - low knowledge of young people's rights
- ▶ **Early marriage and pregnancy** - dropout from school/training, increased dependence and vulnerability
- ▶ **GBV** - violates sexual rights, reinforces vulnerability

### ATBEF in Togo:



## Approach

**Underpinning all initiatives** is community and youth leadership and ownership. Advocacy is at the heart of ATBEF's CSE and service delivery - in and out of school.



### CSE

- ▶ Government leadership
- ▶ Integrate into school curricula
- ▶ Consensus on content
- ▶ School inspectors, teachers, parents, religious leaders
- ▶ Young peer educators
- ▶ Formation of cohorts
- ▶ Radio, comics, teen clubs

### Adolescent & youth-friendly health services

- ▶ Fixed strategy
- ▶ Mobile strategy
- ▶ CBD of contraceptives
- ▶ Social franchises with partner clinics
- ▶ Promotional offers of services
- ▶ Quality of care

### Advocacy

- ▶ Network with other CSOs
- ▶ Sensitize parliamentarians
- ▶ Information days for decision makers
- ▶ Advocacy at regional meetings
- ▶ Youth-led advocacy

### Youth participation & leadership

- ▶ Youth capacity building
- ▶ Youth school clubs
- ▶ Disseminate SRH info through ICT
- ▶ Youth Action Movement (YAM)
- ▶ Youth participate in MA's governance
- ▶ Peer education

### Community leadership & appropriation

- ▶ Community leaders support youth in promoting CSE
- ▶ Intergenerational family dialogue
- ▶ Village charters integrating CSE

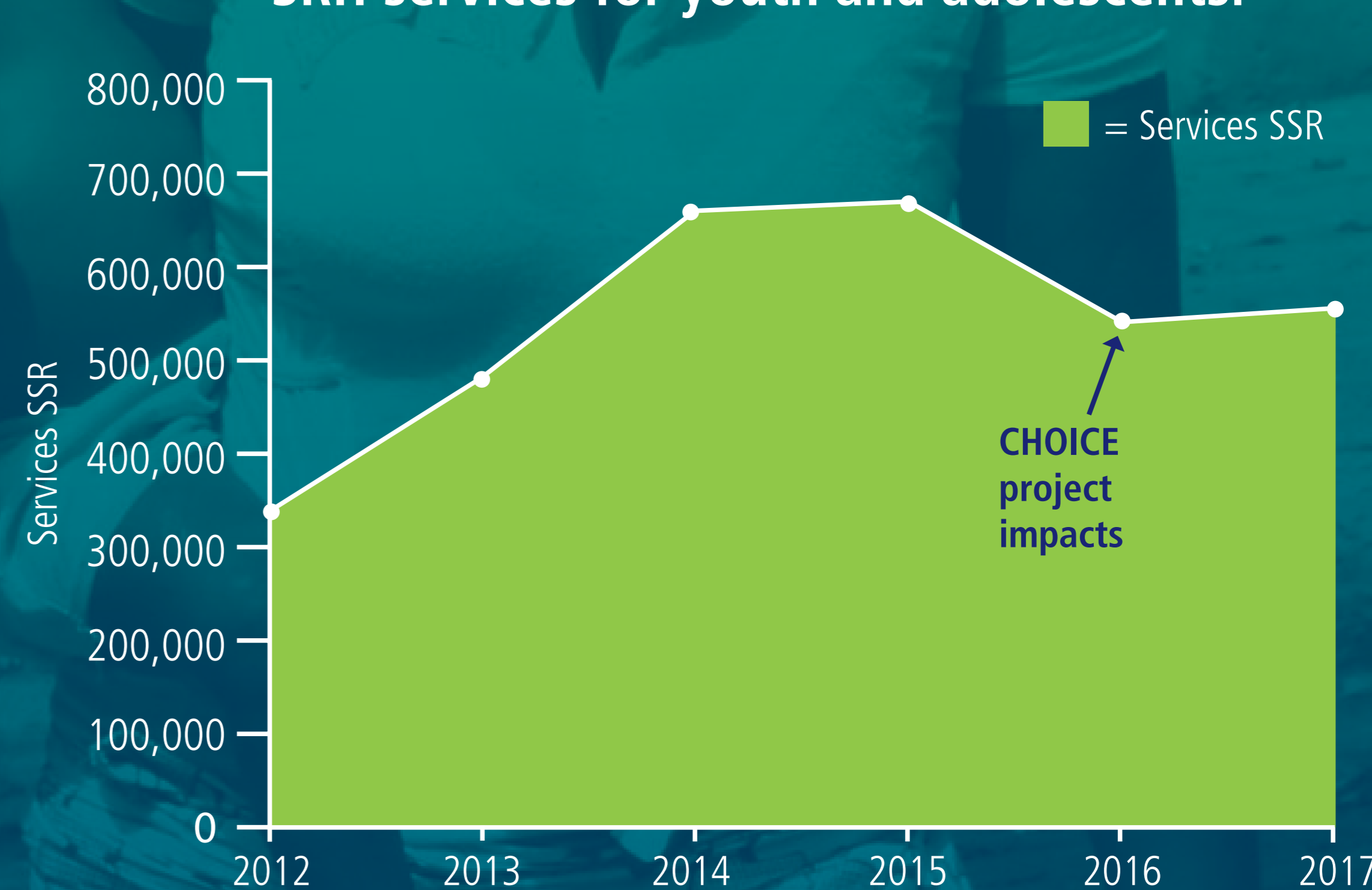
## Targets

- School boys, students
- Adolescents, out of school youth eg. apprentices
- Political and administrative authorities
- Members of Parliament
- Community leaders
- Community based organizations
- Parents' associations
- Village committees

## Results

- Trained 21,750 adolescent clubs' members in CSE
- Provided 413,712 young people with CSE
- Huge drop in pregnancies
- Trained 360 providers in user-friendly services
- Introduced CSE in primary and secondary schools
- Preaching guide for Imams (French & Arabic) and guide for French Protestant churches
- "Allo 1011" set up for SRH information and referrals
- Youth participate in ATBEF: 33% of HQ positions
- ICT Committees by antennas to increase YAM visibility
- Trained 18,712 peer educators in CSE
- Village Girl Protection Charters against forced and transactional sex in **870** localities
- **Young boys** commit themselves to fighting violence against girls (positive masculinity)
- Integration of SRH in **870** villages' action plans
- Trained **2,610** communities in CSE including transactional and forced sex, and youth services

### SRH services for youth and adolescents:



## Lessons learned / future directions

### Lessons learned:

- ▶ **Networking** with CSOs is critical to the success of advocacy and youth access to adolescent & youth-friendly health services
- ▶ **Innovative channels** reach more people, especially youth eg. social media
- ▶ **An integrated and holistic approach** emphasizes community ownership and leadership as a guarantee for success and sustainability
- ▶ **Bridging youth services** (bringing them closer to communities) remains the most efficient approach to youth access

### Future plans:

- ▶ Scale up CSE from pilot schools to more schools
- ▶ Replicate the community-based approach to young people's sexual rights - in all new relevant projects

*"I was a victim of the naivety of adolescence. I accepted the vulgar gifts that local boys offered me, gave into their advances and got pregnant with my father's farm worker. My disappointment when I became a subject of conversation in the village! I was so confused. Counselling from ATBEF enabled me to work hard, pass my exams and give birth safely during the first trimester in college. I cannot imagine my life without ATBEF's support."*

Essi, 15-year-old student, Igbomédji village, Est-Mono.

