

Abortion remains a complex and multidimensional subject that affects women differently depending on their legislative, social, economic and religious context. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, unsafe abortions are a real public health problem. According to the latest studies, 13% of obstetric deaths are attributable to unsafe abortions, often carried out in very poor conditions (unqualified providers, inadequate technical platform, inappropriate and/or obsolete procedures).

Advocates for reproductive health rights continue for access to fair and safe abortion, while fighting against stigma and legal restrictions.

Expanding medical abortion services can help increase access to safe abortion services at lower levels of care, closer to where the majority of the population lives.

The Maputo Protocol's publication in the State country's official Gazette in March 2018, along with the Soins Complets d'Avortement Centrés sur la Femme (SCACF) standards and guidelines in the DRC, prompted the introduction and registration of Mifepack as a recommended regimen for safe medical abortions. The WHO recommends using a combination of mifepristone and misoprostol for medical management of induced abortion and intrauterine foetal demise. The combination package (combipack) of 200 mg of mifepristone and four misoprostol tablets of 200 µg is an effective and convenient presentation, with additional tablets of misoprostol necessary in some cases. Subsequently, DKT introduced the mifepristone-misoprostol combination (known as Mifecare) as an effective alternative to the use of misoprostol alone and other unsafe abortion methods.



Dr Aboubakar BANZA KABONGO,

Medical Director of the EDEN Medical clinic in Lubumbashi

"We're delighted with the training, and I'm particularly happy because we've learned a lot about medical abortion care. It's very necessary because in our country, we have a high mortality rate linked to abortions, and with the knowledge we've acquired, we're going to contribute to reducing this mortality rate".

Dr KABONGO also explained: "I once received a woman with an incomplete abortion, but we were unable to treat her due to a lack of equipment, and things even got complicated with a lesion of the abdominal organs. I think that with the scaling-up of combipack such practical complications will be overcome".



In 2023, with support from the Catalytic Opportunity Funds (COF), DKT DRC developed and implemented a strategy on medical abortion combipack Scale-up in the province of Haut-Katanga, covering 125 facilities in four health zones in the cities of Lubumbashi, Kambove, Likasi and Kipushi. Selected providers from both the public and private sectors were trained in the management of abortions and possible complications (haemorrhages, infections, intra-abdominal lesions, etc.) and the correct use of Mifepack.

Thus, this project aims at two results:

- *Including the qualitative and quantitative improvement of Soins Complets d'Avortement Centrés sur la Femme (SCACF)*
- *Strengthening of awareness on the availability of services in Haut-Katanga.*

A photo of a COF Combipack activity in the field

Training



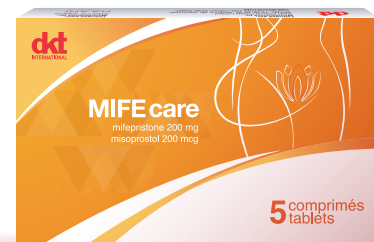
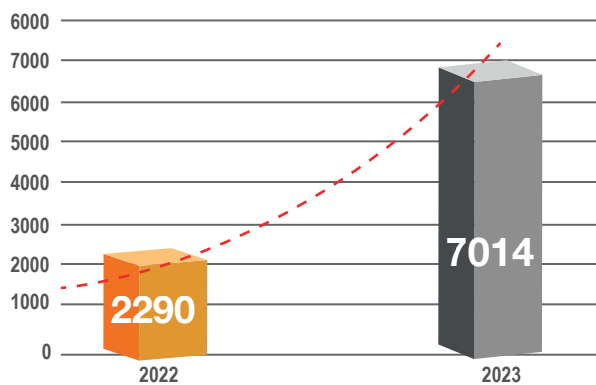
Drawing on funding from Catalytic Opportunity Funds (COF), DKT DRC has successfully trained 450 new providers in medical abortion. Of these, 50 received basic training for safe surgical abortion, and 50 completed Soins Complets d'Avortement Centrés sur la Femme (SCACF) training. Additionally, four sessions of One-Day Training (ODT) were held, each for 100 providers at selected sites. All 450 providers are now qualified to distribute combipack.

Distribution and Sales



From January to December 2023, DKT DRC distributed 7,014 mifecare packs against 2,290 in 2022 in province of Haut-Katanga.

Sales trend MIFECare (in pack unit)



Social Impact



DKT's strategies for scaling up combipack medical abortion in the DRC expanded coverage from four to 13 health zones in four target towns, improving healthcare availability in the province. A network of 485 clinics and community providers was established to offer Soins Complets d'Avortement Centrés sur la Femme (SCACF) information to women seeking safe abortions using Combipack. These efforts enhanced access to sexual and reproductive health information in Haut-Katanga province through telephone support. As a result, 2,120 women and girls received abortion care, and 228 cases were managed by Centres of Excellence after referrals from satellite clinics.



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