

Shaping the Emergency Contraception Market in French West Africa

It's June of 2019, and a young woman walks into a pharmacy in Doula, Cameroon. She approaches the counter with hesitation and in a low voice she asks the pharmacist "can I have the emergency pill?"

On the counter, in plain view, an orange and pink flowered presentation holds boxes of DKT's emergency contraception brand *Postpill*. It's the first time that emergency contraception has been openly displayed in pharmacies in Francophone West and Central Africa ([FWACA](#)) and it costs just \$1.65 — a quarter of the price of the market leading brand.

A Challenging Territory and a Stagnant Market

DKT first launched *Postpill* in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Mali, and Togo. Initial sales were positive but not game-changing and the total market for emergency contraception remained small despite the staggering regional prevalence of unwanted pregnancy. Many healthcare providers still confuse emergency contraception with abortion drugs, believe it can be harmful if taken more than once a month, or think that easy access leads to promiscuity. Pharmaceutical regulations on quality and prices have stifled competition, unintentionally driving prices up. Restrictions on advertising make it difficult to raise awareness of contraception choices at scale.



DKT's *Postpill* costs only \$1.65 and is openly displayed in pharmacies — a first in French West Africa.

DKT's Solution to Growing the Market

The DKT team created a three-point plan that would address barriers at both the pharmacy and consumer levels. Over a 9 month period, DKT's efforts more than quadrupled sales of *Postpill* from an average of 8,000 to 34,000 packs a month.

The first component of this strategy increased availability of the product in pharmacies across the region through a trade marketing campaign that incentivized pharmacists to stock up. The second component encouraged pharmacists to actively display the product so it was easy for consumers to learn about and purchase. Finally, DKT used a combination of TV, radio, billboards,

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digital media, and a midwife-operated helpline to educate women and men and help them locate pharmacies to access the product.

Distribution: Changing the Market from Niche to Mass Market

Emergency contraception in FWACA has been largely priced as a luxury product with consumers paying \$6 for the market leading brand. In order to make emergency contraception more accessible, DKT needed to persuade pharmacists to stock up on the lower priced *Postpill* and to accept its lower profit margins in exchange for a promise of higher sales volumes as a result of the reduced consumer price.

To get products on the shelf, DKT initiated a campaign to incentivize pharmacists, offering special discounts and rewards. Communicating and executing these promotions required carefully calibrated



DKT medical reps helped to educate pharmacies about the product with regular visits and clear information.



Pharmacists were incentivized to stock *Postpill* to ensure they could meet anticipated demand.

and well-organized supply chains to ensure sufficient stocks at the time, place, and price they were most needed. Each outlet was provided with attractive display cases and promotional materials to ensure the products were well merchandized and attention-grabbing. With a majority of key outlets well stocked, DKT shifted to provider education.

Educating Providers

Pharmacists are the gateway to information on EC in FWACA because there are far more of them than clinics, they don't require appointments or have long waiting times, and there is no fee for a pharmacist's advice. Because government regulations prevent companies from directly promoting their brands to the public, pharmacists are the first and often only source of information for most people in the region. In addition, anecdotal reports from the field suggested that many pharmacists are resistant to putting emergency contraception on

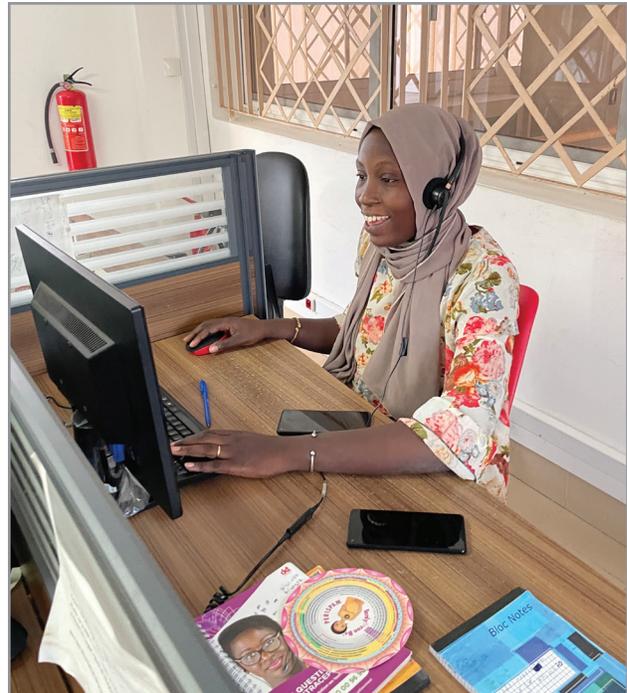
display because they believe it will promote promiscuity with youth, cause an abortion, or be harmful if used consistently. DKT's medical representatives and midwives interact face to face with over 12,000 pharmacies and clinics each month, providing a key opportunity to deliver accurate information and training. This process is supported by DKT's marketing and training materials that build capacity of healthcare professionals. In addition, healthcare professionals and consumers can access instant support through the DKT Call Centre, a sexual and reproductive resource that is the first of its kind in the region.

During the campaign, DKT Mystery Shoppers paid visits to more than 400 pharmacies, checking on availability and displays as well as the ability of pharmacists to provide accurate, youth-friendly counseling. This helped to increase product availability and ensure consumers were afforded the information they needed. Mystery Shoppers reported 91% of pharmacies displayed two or more *Postpill* materials, proof that the education and marketing materials were effective.

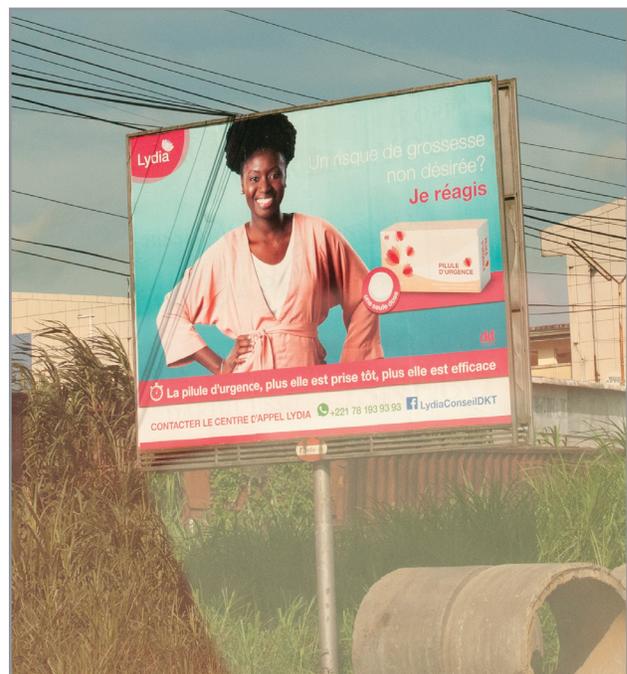
Reaching Consumers to Change Behavior

To educate consumers about the benefits of *Postpill*, DKT launched a comprehensive behavior change campaign that included TV, billboards, and [digital media](#). The messaging centered around youth,

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The Call Centre accepts calls, messages, and chats from all countries in the region and helps women understand their contraceptive options.



DKT used mass media like TV, radio, and billboards to communicate directly with women.

myth busting, and creating emergency contraception awareness. Featuring local young actors and a modern story, DKT aimed to appeal to the generation most affected by unwanted pregnancy: teens and young adults. The response to the campaigns was overwhelmingly positive with 98% of survey respondents stating they supported the message.

The First EC TV Commercial in

West Africa: The 30 second emergency contraception TV spot that played across the region was the first of its kind. It depicts the journey of a young couple who realize that their condom has broken and follows their path from the bedroom, through the Lydia Call Center, and finally the pharmacy to buy emergency contraception. The key messages, which explained the product benefits and highlighted the non-judgmental attitude



Imagery from the TV campaign was used for billboards targeted digital adverts on Facebook, Google, and Instagram. This was the first time that emergency contraception was talked about so openly for the public.

of the healthcare providers, were reiterated through billboards and digital media.

Digital media and the Lydia Contact

Centre: DKT used targeted digital media to direct viewers to the regional Lydia Call Centre where operators gave both counselling and referrals to a pharmacy or healthcare provider in the callers' neighborhood. Targeted digital outreach boosted calls and pharmacy referrals fivefold.

Results — Uptake and Purchase of Emergency Increase Along with General Awareness

This multi-pronged effort to increase access and use of emergency contraceptive produced results. Over a 9-month period across 6 countries, sales of emergency contraception increased 425% to an average of 34,000 units per month. As seen in the graph below, regulatory approvals for this product were finalized in the Fall of 2018, and the marketing campaigns followed soon thereafter. Sales into the trade were followed by repurchases and uptake, a trend that has continued. The increased sales and uptake of emergency contraception in the FWACA region is not a standalone campaign but a result of what is possible when both trade and consumer barriers are addressed at every level of the supply chain.

At the same time, consumer awareness of the product and price were greatly improved. In Mali, for example, DKT

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**Pour éviter une grossesse après
un accident ? un rapport
sexuel non-protégé ?**



Il existe la pilule d'urgence

Postpill



Agissez vite

**À utiliser dans les 72h
maximum** après un rapport
sexuel non-protégé.

**Plus le comprimé Postpill
est pris tôt, plus il est
efficace.**

**Postpill est disponible sans ordonnance,
dans toutes les pharmacies.**
Adressez-vous directement à votre pharmacien.

Postpill est recommandé par l'Organisation Mondiale pour la Santé

Lydia 

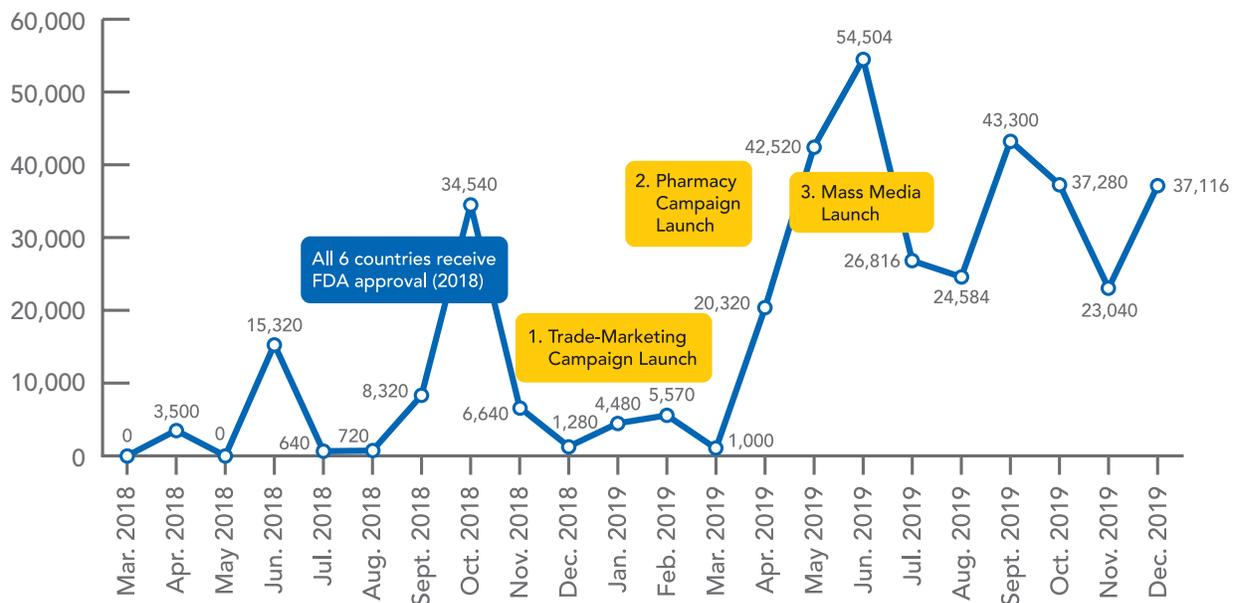
**This advert uses positive, youth-friendly messaging to convey
key information in a non-medicalized manner.**

conducted an awareness survey which showed an increase in overall awareness of emergency contraceptives from 29% to 39% before and after the campaign. In Cameroon, emergency contraception awareness is highest in the region at 72% but brand awareness is low. After the campaign, respondents reported \$1.70 (the price of DKT's *Postpill*) as the average price they would pay for emergency contraception — despite the fact that the second most commonly cited brand after *Postpill* is sold at double the price.



DKT's emergency contraception is now available in 10 countries in French West Africa. More to come soon.

Sales of Emergency Contraception January 2018 - December 2019



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