



VALUE FOR MONEY CASE STUDY

Volunteer doctors tackle health needs of rural communities

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Volunteering in rural communities in Enugu State is giving Dr Chuka Agunwa the satisfaction that he always desired. “There are so many doctors seeking opportunities to give back to communities,” says Dr Agunwa. Each week since May 2012, the Partnership for Transforming Health Systems Phase Two (PATHS2) has sponsored him to provide much-needed medical care, especially to pregnant women and children, in 7 primary health centres (PHCs).

The inadequate number of qualified health care providers working in rural areas in Enugu State makes Agunwa’s contribution especially important. The 2010 African Journal on Health reports that there is only one doctor for every 30,000 people in Enugu State. A 2011 PATHS2 formative assessment shows the absence of doctors as a major reason clients stay away from the PHCs.

In April 2013, PATHS2 began working with the Enugu State government to set up the volunteer doctors’ scheme. Other stakeholders involved in this effort included the Local Government Areas (LGAs), National Youth Service Scheme (NYSC), National Medical Association (NMA), and the Association of Resident Doctors (ARDs). PATHS2 provides transportation, lunch, and occasional skills-improvement opportunities for the doctors. In return, the programme saves 10,320,000 naira (£41,280)



Dr. Chuka Agunwa attends to a mother and her baby at Nara health centre, Enugu

by working with the volunteer doctors rather than hiring consultants as originally planned. Each week, between 750 and 800 clients receive free medical care. Overall, between January to June 2013, 40 volunteer doctors served 25,836 people, including 17,880 pregnant women and 3,684 children.

“It is amazing how much we can achieve with so little finances. Deploying doctors to cover PHCs would cost the State Government so much,” says State Ministry



Cross section of doctors participating in the PATHS2-supported Volunteer Doctors Scheme

of Health Director for Public Health Services Dr Paulinus Ossai.

Dr Ugwunna Nwachukwu coordinates the volunteer scheme and works as the resident doctor at the Enugu State University Teaching Hospital. He says, “Satisfaction is drawn from the fact that the lives of more women, children and even adult men are being saved through the scheme.”

PATHS2 is a six-year DFID-funded programme

focused on improving the planning, financing and delivery of sustainable, replicable, pro-poor services for improved health outcomes for women and children in Nigeria.

Over the past four years, PATHS2 has been working closely with the federal and the five state governments to strengthen health systems in order to improve health care delivery. With the help of the volunteers, PATHS2 is supporting the Enugu State government to get health care to the people that need it the most.

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The Partnership for Transforming Health Systems Phase Two (PATHS2) is a six-year development initiative that aims to ensure Nigeria achieves important health-related Millennium Development Goals.

Funded by UKaid from the Department for International Development, PATHS2 is working in partnership with the Government of Nigeria and other stakeholders to improve the planning, financing, and delivery of sustainable health services for those most in need. In addition to its work at the federal level, the PATHS2 programme is implemented in the five states of Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, and Lagos. PATHS2 follows the successful PATHS programme, which was implemented from 2002 to 2008.

PATHS2 is managed by Abt Associates, in association with Options, Mannion Daniels, and the Axios Foundation.

