



CASE STUDY

Improving Health by Computerising Data on Human Resources

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Kaduna State Ministry of Health officials during training on Human Resources for Health Information System

The number of women and children dying in Nigeria from preventable causes remains very high. Located in Nigeria's northern region, Kaduna State accounts for an even higher proportion of deaths of mothers and children. A 2008 Nigeria Health System Assessment revealed that 55 percent of the Kaduna State health budget is devoted to the health workforce—but, as Dr Usman Sarki recently pointed out, “Without proper planning and management of our human resources for health,

achieving our Millennium Development Goal targets will be even more difficult.” Dr Sarki is the Kaduna State Ministry of Health's Director of Planning, Research and Statistics.

In 2011, the UKaid-funded PATHS2 programme began working with the State Ministry of Health to improve capacity in planning, management and development of human resources for health (HRH).

An assessment conducted to establish baseline data revealed that Kaduna State had a low health worker density of 8.4 doctors and 26.1 nurses per 100,000 population. The assessment also revealed that distribution of more-qualified health professionals was skewed towards secondary- and tertiary-level health care facilities. The secondary level of care absorbed 296 doctors and 770 nurses, which is nearly double the number of doctors working in the 985 Primary Health Centres across the state, and three times the number of nurses. This lack of staff in primary care facilities helps to discourage the use of health services, especially in rural areas. Nearly half—48.6 percent—of women in Kaduna State said the reason they did not go to a health facility for services during pregnancy and to give birth was that the facilities had no provider.

The shortage of staff is compounded by a lack of basic information on the demographics of the Kaduna State health workforce. While some data does exist, it is often not accessible or is inconsistently formatted, which makes effective HR management difficult. The outdated paper-based human resources system makes effective and strategic decision-making especially hard. “We need to know what we have and where we have them. We have to stop running up and down to get such important information when needed. This information should readily be at our disposal,” said Dr. Sarki. Without substantial improvements in health

workforce management, other significant investments in the health sector in areas like training and capitalising facilities will not deliver on their promise.

For these reasons, the state is using findings from an assessment that PATHS2 conducted to develop a state-specific HRH policy and strategic plan—as was advocated by the National Strategic Health Development Plan, which promotes adequate and equitable distribution of HRH at all levels. PATHS2 also supported the establishment and institutionalisation of an HRH unit in the State Ministry of Health, and the development of a centralised web-based Human Resources Information System (HRIS). To date, 87 people have received training on the HRHIS software and database operations notably 18 key officials of the State Ministry of Health, 23 Monitoring and Evaluation Officers (one from each Local Government Area), 32 hospital secretaries from secondary health facilities and 14 from the State Ministry of Health agencies.

“The time has come for a change. We are at a critical period as we approach the deadline for the MDGs, and we really thank PATHS2 for taking the important step of supporting our ministry to achieve this much-needed HRIS,” said Dr. Sarki. With the HRIS and other HRH investments, the ministry is poised to improve the statistical evidence available to decision-makers who are combating maternal and child mortality in the state.

For more information, please contact: Gafar Alawode (g.alawode@paths2.org)

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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.

