

Joint Efforts Restore Confidence in Health Care System: *the Kunchi PHC example*



Kelechi Nworgu with her young girls-students in Kunchi

"This place (Kunchi PHC) used to be a shade for goats when we first resumed" says Kelechi Nworgu, a midwife, "the villagers never used to come here"

The previous state of the PHC might have added to maternal mortality rate for Kano which is estimated at 1025/100,000 live births, with child mortality and infant mortality rates at 176/1000 and 114/1000 respectively.

Since the PHC is the closest access point for health services for community members, its functionality is critical for saving lives especially those of women and children who are the most vulnerable. Towards this aim, the out of use PHC has been rehabilitated, health workers and trained

Kunchi is a rural community in Kunchi LGA, Kano State. It has a population of about 126,000 people who are predominantly farmers and fishermen. As a result of collaborative efforts of PATHS2 with other key stakeholders, the confidence of residents in available health care delivery system was restored. Kunchi Primary Health Care (PHC) centre now records an average of nine women attending ante-natal and an increase in out-patient visits. Previously, there was no record of attendance as the people abandoned the PHC because of inadequate facilities and health workers.

midwives were employed and an ambulance with a resident driver has been provided. In addition to these, the PHC which now boasts of an upgraded cold chain storage for immunization vaccines and other prescription drugs has been provided with a 114 KVA diesel generator in order to ensure regular power supply.

All of these happened due to the joint efforts of PATHS2, the Kano State Government and the Kunchi Local Government Authority (LGA) with the assistance of local community leaderships.

It all began with the capitalization of three PHCs in Kunchi LGA by PATHS2, of which the Kunchi

community PHC was a beneficiary. The capitalization entailed the provision of drugs and equipment worth more than half a million Naira through the Drug Revolving Fund (DRF) scheme.

This drew the attention of the Kano State Government to health service delivery in the LGA. In response, the State Government complemented the availability of drugs and equipment by posting midwives to the facilities under the Midwifery Service Scheme (MSS) and PATHS2 subsequently collaborated with National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) to conduct Live Saving Skills (LSS) training for the posted midwives. The midwives then started an interactive platform for the community to interact with the

local health personnel. Kelechi Nworgu tells the story;

"Initially, we used to have about 10 cases of diarrhoea daily, then we started our outreaches and the number has reduced. We went through the Sarkin Fulani who helped us contact the Ward Development Committee (WDC), Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) and other influencers. Then they used the town crier to make the announcement. We had 80 people in attendance at the first outreach but subsequent ones saw more than 100 people in attendance"

The desire to support a new order of development in Kunchi community motivated the LGA authority led by Alhaji Sanusi Sani Gwarmai not only to upgrade the cold chain equipment to improve routine and supplemental immunization at the LGA but to complement the upgrading with a dedicated 114KVA generator for Kunchi PHC. He further approved the allocation of an amount of money for fuelling the generator.

The confidence of community members was restored back into the improved Kunchi PHC with the support of regular community outreaches. As a result, more people have started coming to seek medical attention.



The availability of drugs at the Kunchi community PHC motivated the Kunchi LGA Chairman, Alhaji Sanusi Sani Gwarmai, to upgrade the cold and chain equipment along with an 114KVA generator

Now, health services delivery in Kunchi have improved remarkably. As told by Nkechi, a midwife at the Kunchi PHC, *"A certain pregnant woman with Polyhydrominus (excess amniotic fluid) came here. After explaining things to her, she started coming here regularly and we were monitoring her. So, when she started 'spotting', she came here immediately and we rushed her to the Kazaure General hospital about 25Km from here in the ambulance. Now anytime we have emergencies, we make use of the ambulance. Even the skeptical men have started coming to the centre"*.

The positive impact of the presence of the two female health workers has also extended to girl child education through the instituting of a fledging after-school class for young girls by the midwives. Kelechi Nworgu recounts how it

started; *"We started off teaching them about their health and their bodies, and then went into English language proper. But because of their level, we really had to start from the basic alphabets!"*. The mothers in Kunchi are happy at this opportunity for their young daughters to have access to some basic education. *"The mothers even send us farm produce through their daughters in appreciation"* – Kelechi Nworgu

Building better relationship between the different levels of government and community groups towards improving access to health service delivery is one of the strategic approaches of PATHS2 which is expected to contribute to improved maternal and child health in Kano state and the consequent attainment of the MDGs four and five.

Source: Kano State Socio-demographic Factsheet 2009

ABOUT PATHS2

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, through the UK's Department of 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 in most need.

Apart from working at a Federal level, PATHS2 is working in the five States of Enugu, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna and Lagos.

PATHS2 follows the successful PATHS1, which ran from 2002 to 2008, and was also funded by UKaid.

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