

Leadership Development for Traditional and Religious Leaders on Family Planning and Reproductive Health

LDT SUMMARY
(2009)

Leadership development forum for traditional and religious leaders (LDT) is one of the dRPC projects funded by USAID in three states of northern Nigeria: Niger, Sokoto and Zamfara state. The project has the timeline of 2 years (phase I) starting from February 2009 to February 2011. The main focus of the project is leadership in reproductive health and family planning. The major activities started in the first year (2009) are *leadership development forums* and *mentoring program*. Other supporting activities conducted are sensitization visits, baseline survey to identify appropriate leaders and development of curriculum and training manual for the leadership forums. All these activities are geared towards achieving the project goal which is to create a cadre of champions for FP/RH among religious and traditional leaders in the three focal states. The objective of the project is to increase leadership knowledge and build capacity of the leaders on FP/RH. The target participants are traditional leaders (ranging from the first class emir to district heads, village heads and ward heads) and Islamic scholars (including Friday mosques imams, five daily prayers imam, *Tafsir* scholars and other preachers of different categories).

Year activities:

Leadership Development Forums

The first and most important activity conducted during the year is the leadership development forum where the capacity of the leaders was built in terms of getting accurate information on FP/RH and leadership role. The purpose of this training is to help the leaders to create enabling environment for FP/RH in their various communities. These forums took place at different levels and locations:

- *Egypt Study Tour*
- *State Leadership Forums (level 2 batch I)*



Dr. Gabal responding to the district head of Wushishi during on of the group works at Egypt study tour 2009

It is worth mentioning that the composition of the participants in the four forums conducted in 2009 where 80 leaders were trained included one first class emir, 14 district heads, six village heads and 12 imams who offer Friday sermons in various mosques, the positions that are considered influential among Muslims in northern Nigeria.

dRPC documented a lot of achievements in the year after the conclusion of all the forums, these include:

- On their return from the study tour, leaders got increase in knowledge and clarification on some controversial points such as the fact that Family Planning does not necessarily mean limiting the number of children but spacing between pregnancies and even helping infertile couples to produce children.
- Validity of many aspects of family planning in Islam
- Health is determinant in furthering planning

- Need for qualitative nation as against mere quantitative nation
- Realistic considerations for mothers, children, society and Islam in producing and upbringing of children
- Some leaders formed their own associations on RH such as *ISLAH FOUNDATION* (Niger state) and *Women Health Initiatives* (Sokoto state)
- Islamic scholars made several public pronouncements in the Friday sermons, teaching sessions, at wedding ceremonies, naming ceremonies and media programs
- Traditional leaders (district heads) sensitized their village heads and ward heads. The sensitized heads disseminated the message to the community members.
- Leaders sought to collaborate with the politicians and government officials on RH issues through advocacy, meetings and mobilization.
- Leaders admitted that they were changed, informed and educated following the tour.



Leaders at International Islamic Center Cairo during the interactive session on validity of FP in Islam, Egypt study tour 2009

s/n	Date	Category of participants	No. Invited	No. attended	IAPs developed	Venue
Study Tour (level 1)						
1	27 July – 8 August 2009	Islamic scholars and traditional leaders (from Niger, Sokoto and Zamfara States)	21	20 (these 20 participants attended the 3 in country forums thus, they are subtracted from the grand total to avoid double counting)	Nil	Egypt
State forum (Level 2 batch 1)						
Niger State						
2	2-3 November 2009	Islamic Scholars and Traditional Leader	30	24	23	Zamfara State
Sokoto State						
3	17-19 October 2009	Islamic Scholars and Traditional Leader	30	29	23	Sokoto State
Zamfara State						
4	17-19 October 2009	Islamic Scholars and Traditional Leader	30	27	20	Zamfara State
			Total	80	66	

Mentoring Program

After the conclusion of the four forums intended for the year, dRPC engaged consultants with the support of dRPC monitoring team to visit the leaders in their various communities to ensure proper and effective implementation of their IAPs. Among 81 leaders planned to benefit from the mentoring program during the two year project timeline (phase I), 12 leaders were contacted physically and given technical assistance by various experts during the December 2009 mentoring visits. Mentoring process being continuous, many leaders have been contacted through phone calls as a means of remote mentoring which dRPC devised. The exercise will continue in 2010 to catch up with the target number of leaders to be mentored before the end of the project.

Performance Monitoring

Carried out side by side with mentoring program is performance monitoring exercise that was conducted by the dRPC project team. All the three states were visited in the last quarter of the year to ensure that leaders implement their individual action plans developed during the leadership forums. From among the 80 participants trained, the team monitored the activities of 37 within the year. During the monitoring, the project team discovered that the leaders were actively engaged in making public pronouncements in support of reproductive health. They were clarifying issues that used to be controversial in their communities regarding family planning. Some of the traditional leaders held several town halls meeting with different class of community members on how to improve maternal health situation in their communities. They organized community mobilization exercises to sensitize remote rural communities under their emirates.

Advocacy Visits

Apart from the main activities which are fundamental to achieving the project objectives, dRPC supported the leaders in paying three advocacy visits in 2009. Additional three advocacies are planned for next year, 2010 for the same purpose. The three advocacies were paid to the state house of assemblies of the focal states and important ministries that are directly stakeholders in improving FP/RH service delivery in the states. These are ministry of Health, Women Affairs, LGA, and Budget and Economic Planning. The purpose of their advocacy visit is to join hand with their counterparts political leaders to ensure improvement in reproductive health service delivery particularly increase in budgetary allocation and coming up with new policies in RH/FP. The dRPC is looking forward to this good news in the next year's health budget and government policies.

LDT SUMMARY (2010)

Introduction

In 2010, all the activities started during the 2009 reporting period were continued. The leadership forums were completed, mentoring program was maximized, the remaining three advocacies were paid, and performance monitoring visits were also paid once in each quarter as required by the project implementation plan. However, a few new activities were undertaken which include creation of alumni networks, update workshops and mid term evaluation exercise.

Year activities:

Leadership Development Forums

In order to obtain the exact required number of leaders contained in the dRPC work plan as project beneficiaries, dRPC organized three additional forums, one in each state where 30 people were invited for the three states. These forums were conducted between February and March 2010. In May 2010, regional forum was organized. All the 106 leaders who were trained in the 7 forums that took place between July 2009 and March 2010 were invited; but 92 attended. The purpose of the meeting is to create a general alumni network and to share some experience they passed through on their return to their communities after the forums in the course of implementing their action plans. The leaders reached an agreement during the regional forum using open space technology

on points of consensus, point of disagreement and general recommendations on the nine themes which they considered as main drawback to the effective implementation of FP/RH problems in their states and northern Nigeria in general.

Summary of the 2010 forums

s/n	Date	Category of participants	No. Invited	No. attended	IAPs developed	Venue
<i>State forum (Level 2 batch 2)</i>						
Niger state						
5	5-6 February 2010	Islamic Scholars and Traditional Leader	10	6	6	Niger State
Sokoto state						
6	26-27 February 2010	Islamic Scholars and Traditional Leader	10	10	10	Sokoto State
Zamfara state						
7	26-27 February 2010	Islamic Scholars and Traditional Leader	10	10	10	Zamfara State
			TOTAL	26	26	
<i>Regional forum (Level 1 & 2)</i>						
8	8 May 2010	Islamic scholars and traditional leaders	106	92	Not applicable	Kano State

Creation of Alumni Networks

This is the third main activity of the project which occurred in two phases during the year. The first phase took place in each of the three focal states. These are state level alumni networks. The second phase was carried out jointly by the same

participants of the three states. This is called general alumni network because it merged the three networks together. The purpose of the merger is to share different experience from different states. This is important because it brought together different ideas, strategies and approaches from the three states. Members of the networks are those participants who successfully completed the leadership development forums on reproductive health and family planning. They appointed His Royal Highness the Emir of Anka Alhaji Attahiru Muhammad Ahmad CON, as their chairman.



HRH Alhaji Attahiru Muhammad Ahmad CON, the emir of Anka chairman at the general alumni network and Mr Abdul-Fatah the Director General of the Institute of Training and Research on Family and Population (ITRFP) Alexandria Egypt contributing at the occasion. Regional leadership forum 8 May 2010

The main objective of creating the alumni network is to inculcate a sense of fellowship among the traditional and religious leaders. This will help in instilling the spirit of working together as a team by increasing collective endeavour within and beyond the timeline of the project towards transforming the role of traditional and religious leaders in taking responsibility of creating enabling environment for providing good reproductive health services. Specifically, it will assist them to attain sustainability in their battle against maternal mortality in the three states. Moreover, these networks have been used to share information and exchange

experience, among them and help to support any leadership development for the promotion of FP/RH programs in their states.



**Makun Nupe, the District Head of Bida Alhaji Mahmoud Ndayako
accentuating the demand for working together for success in maternal health
during the creation on Niger state alumni**

Alumni	Date	Venue	Attendance	Chairman
State level (Niger)	7 March 2010	Bida Niger State	25 participants: 9 traditional leaders and 16 religious leaders (5 level 1 leaders)	The District Head of Gbangba Alhaji Mujahid Ndayako
State level (Sokoto)	28 February 2010	Sokoto, Sokoto state	26 participants: 2 traditional leaders, 24 religious leaders (4 level 1 leaders)	District Head of Tambuwal, Alhaji, Mainasara Dahiru
State level (Zamfara)	28 February 2010	Anka Zamfara state	55 participants: 13 traditional leaders, 42 religious leaders (6 level 1 leaders)	Dr Abubakar Danladi
General Alumni	8 May 2010	Kano, Kano state	92 participants: 27 traditional leaders, 65 religious leaders (18 level 1 leaders)	The Emir of Zamfara Alhaji Attahiru Muhammad Ahmed CON

Advocacy visits

As follow up of the 2009 advocacy visits, dRPC supported the same leaders in their attempt to pay similar advocacy as a reminder of 2009 request and advocated for fresh issues. Putting together the six advocacies of the 2009 and 2010, the project finds these visits significant because they led to the following achievements:

- Increase in budgetary allocation to health sector with 1.5% approximately in the budget of the three state of 2010
- Passing of a bill on primary health care development agency in Niger state (2009), Zamfara and Sokoto state (2010)
- Preparations for conducting a special workshop for all traditional leaders of Zamfara state on RH/FP, HIV and leaders by the State Ministry for Local Government and the State House of Assembly in collaboration with dRPC.
- Looking into possibility of involving traditional leaders in the local government budget preparation committee of Zamfara state.



The Chairman Health Committee Sokoto State House of Assembly responding to the advocacy team request for budget increase to health sector, September 2010

Update workshop

As the project approaches towards the end of its first phase, in November 2010 dRPC put a strategy in place for sharing experiences between USAID IPs and the traditional and religious leaders. While the USAID IPs share with the leaders new innovations in health issues, the leaders shared with the IPs their local experiences during the implementation of their action plans in their communities. Therefore, all the leaders who took part in the study tour to Egypt were invited. To make it more informative and educative, female Islamic scholars who attended Mali study tour and other scholars who went for other study tours under LDM project were all invited. Sessions were allocated to each category participants and they shared deeply with their counterparts within the two days of the workshop. During the shared learning workshop

- 11 female Islamic scholars (Mali study tour participants), 22 Islamic and traditional leaders (LDT Egypt study tour participants) and six male Islamic scholars (LDM Egypt study tour) were in attendance.
- USAID implementation Partners from four state of northern Nigeria were also invited to share with the leaders their activities in the focal states, the IPs are: ACQUIRE, Tship, SFP, and MSH.
- Other institutions invited are West African College of Nurses and Midwives as well as National Primary Health Care Development Agency
- The workshop has two objectives:

“To increase knowledge, sustain commitment and expand positive project result by exposing level of champions to new programs, best practices, and new experience on RH/FP.”

“To expand knowledge of new high impact FP/RH initiatives and projects within local communities as well as USAID supported projects in neighboring countries such as Mali.”



Leaders and IPs are making some presentations and experience sharing during the workshop. 29-30 October, 2010 Bolton White Hotel Abuja Nigeria

Mid-Term Project Evaluation

Having completed most part of the activities in the project and approached towards project's results level, the dRPC embarked upon mid term evaluation in December 2010 which will stretch into first quarter of 2011. The dRPC held two meeting in December 2010 with 30 researchers from different academic institutes,

independent consultants and members of Fulbright Alumni Association of Nigeria. During the two meetings presentations on the project's activities and results were made. Afterwards, instruments for data collection were developed where FGDs, in-depth interview and community based survey were agreed to be used. The data of the field work will be analyzed and evaluated for the next phase of the project.

Mentoring Program & Performance Monitoring

Mentoring and monitoring continued throughout the year. The consultant engaged to mentor the leaders were able to reach the target and surpassed by 17 leaders. One monitoring visit was paid each quarter besides remote mentoring through phone from the office.

Lessons Learnt

From the interactions and interviews between the project team and the leaders, dRPC learnt some important lessons which include:

- Traditional and religious leaders are much more committed to developmental programs that bring benefit to their people than political leaders.
- Any new program or project that is introduced to the communities in northern Nigeria is fully accepted if and only if it is conveyed through traditional and religious leaders.
- Involvement of traditional and religious leaders has created a new dawn of discussing family planning issues in religious gatherings which used to be a taboo.
- It was discovered that engaging husbands as against engaging only wives in selling the idea of reproductive health leads to a wider coverage. This is

because in northern Nigeria wives are always loyal to their husbands' wishes.