

# Success Stories of Clients and Health Providers from SLaB Project Katsina State, Nigeria

November 2014 – November 2016



SAVING  
LIVES  
AT BIRTH:  
A GRAND CHALLENGE FOR DEVELOPMENT



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## **1. Introduction**

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The development Research and Projects Centre designed and implemented 'Building Capacity for Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health in Northern Nigeria 2-year innovative project in Katsina state, Nigeria with funding from Saving Lives at Birth Partnership. During the life of the project, a core group of Muslim Opinion Leaders underwent training of trainers on the correct Islamic Precepts on Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health which enabled them to roll out trainings for health providers/administrators on the correct Islamic precepts on:- 1) family planning/child spacing; 2) being attended by male health workers; 3) facility based antenatal care and delivery; 4) allowing neonates and children to accept polio and routine immunization; and 5) on age of marriage.

## **2. PROBLEM OVERVIEW:**

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The project is informed by the basic assumption that the health seeking behavior of women and men accessing services and the health providing practices of health workers in local communities in Northern Nigeria are affected by misperceptions and incorrect information about what is permitted or not permitted within Islam. Data from the NDHS confirms the assumption that women in the

programming state, Katsina state, are reluctant to deliver in hospitals due to religious/customary beliefs (NDHS 2013, Table 9.6 page 138). No DHS data exist of health workers bias and incorrect information about what is permitted within Islam. However, studies conducted by fellows of the Leadership Development for the Mobilization of Reproductive Health in Northern Nigeria suggests that Muslim health workers are as likely to hold conservative views about MNCH services as the communities they serve. In such cases, they do not seek to counsel or endeavor to persuade clients to accept services.

## **3. PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:**

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During the life of this project, 15 Muslim Opinion Leaders (MOLs) underwent an intensive 10 days Training of Trainer on the Islamic Perspective on Maternal Neonatal and Child services in Egypt. The MOLs were certified as Master trainers by the Institute for Training and Research in RH/FP, Egypt and the International Islamic Centre for Studies and Research in Population, University in Egypt.



**Figure 1: A cross section of MOLs during a session in Alexandria, Egypt**

After their return from Egypt, the MOLs, embarked on training of Health Care providers from 5 target facilities<sup>1</sup> in Katsina state, 141 in-service health care providers from the target facilities and 193 Junior Providers (Pre-service Students) underwent two rounds of intensive training on the Islamic Perspective on Maternal Neonatal and Child services anchored by the MOLs. The In-service and Pre-service providers were trained on how best to communicate (using religious texts and argument) correct messages on Islamic precepts on: - 1) family planning/child spacing; 2) female patient being attended to by male health workers or vice versa; 3) facility based antenatal care and delivery; 4) allowing neonates and children to

<sup>1</sup> a. Comprehensive Health Centre, Daura; b. Comprehensive Health Centre, Funtua; c. Maternal & Child Health Care (MCHC) Fago; d. Maternal and Child Health Care, Shinkafi; and e. Primary Health Centre, Dayi

accept polio and routine immunization; and 5) on age of marriage.



**Figure 2: A Male MOLs during training session for Pre-service Health Providers**

The MOLs, with the support of the dRPC SLaB team, designed and rolled out community outreaches and sensitization visits to the communities where the target facilities are located. The visits addressed the misperceptions existing in the communities and mobilized the community members to access the MNCH services

After undergoing the training by the MOLs, the Health Care Providers were equipped with religious text and arguments which they effectively utilized in their day to day interactions with existing and new clients.

#### **4. PROGRAM/ACTIVITY OUTPUTS**

- 71,880 clients received counseling on MNCH services and Islam by the trained providers in 15 Month
- 15 ISOLs trained in TOT (12 Katsina and 3 Jigawa)

141 Health Providers Reached (136 Health Providers and 5 In-charge of the target facilities) and 193 Junior Providers (Pre-service Students)

- The Ministry of Health, Katsina state Muslim Community School of Health Technology in Katsina has agreed to teach the Islamic morals and principles in relation to health care service as non-credit course as it cannot be taught as credit course without the prior approval of the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria.
- The Katsina state Primary Health Care Development Agency has agreed to consider the introduction of Continuing Education Program at the Agency that will serve as a coordinating centre for the training of students and staff working at health facilities in the State.
- Recommendations were made to the Katsina State Primary Health Care Development Agency and the Katsina state Ministry of Health has agreed to introduce a course on Islamic Morals and Principles in relation to health care service into the curriculum, as non-credit course, of training Health workers in the state

#### **Data collection Methodology for Success Story**

At the end of the project, four intervention facilities from four Local Government Areas in Katsina state were selected via cluster random sampling for qualitative data collection to assess how the intervention impacted on the lives of both clients and health providers. The respondents were selected individually using convenience sampling method. The data was collected through one-on-one in-depth interviews conducted by the dRPC-SLaB team. Informed consent of the respondents were sought for and obtained before the interviews.

#### **5. TESTIMONIALS**

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Interactions of the dRPC-SLaB project team with some of the project beneficiaries attest to the success recorded and the challenges faced during the intervention. On the part of the Health Care Providers, the qualitative data collected shows that the trainings rolled out by the Muslim Opinion Leaders had increased their confidence level and enabled them to interact with their existing and new clients on issues relating Routine Immunization and MNCH services. Some of the Health Care Providers commented on the impact of the intervention:

*Sabiu Ali a health provider at CHC Daura*



*“This training has improved my exposure concerning my job. Sometimes there are procedures that only a few people can do and when the females are not available I have to explain to the patients first before they decide whether or not to let me do it. An example of how the training has helped me is there was a time a woman gave birth and required episiotomy but the husband refused, I used the knowledge from my training to explain to him and he agreed.”*

***Imrana Hamisu a health provider at CHC Daura***

*“There was a woman who wanted to do family planning but didn’t know how to access it. We recommended she call her husband, she did and he was counselled where he accepted. They are now doing it and everything is fine”*

Furthermore, the Health Care Providers testified that there had been an increase in attendance to Facilities:

***Gami Indazo a health provider at MCHC Shinkafi***

*” The number of clients accessing these services has increased tremendously. Initially people were reluctant to come but now they come in hundreds per week. I’m also surprised how fast the news spread but our records are there to show. Also the clients initially preferred to seek counselling at home but now they are coming to the health facilities for these services.”*

***Aisha Aliyu a health provider at MCHC Shinkafi***

***Sani Abdu a health provider at MCHC Shinkafi***

*“There was a man who came here with his wife but didn’t want me to attend to her at first, then I sat with him and counselled him based on the knowledge I acquired. He later agreed and was so happy to the extent that he subsequently brought his other two wives for antenatal care. He initially thought it was wrong”*



**Figure 3: The GCC/ SLaB team Members Conducting interview with a Health Care Provider in MCHC Shinkafi**

*“Increase in the number of clients to us is a remarkable achievement. We even sometimes tease them because we are surprised how people in rural areas can accept such changes in a short period of time. Initially it was difficult to get up to 5 people coming for family planning per month. But now we sometimes see 30 and even up to 50 patients per month. I used to see more patients for counselling at home, but now the number is higher in the facility.”*



**Figure 4: A Health Care Provider being interviewed by dRPC Staff at Maternal and Child Health Clinic Shinkafi**

***Aisha Yusufari a health provider at MCHC Shinkafi***

The clients, on their part, reported observing positive changes in the attitude of the Health Care Providers towards them; some of them stated that the Health Care Providers are now ***Mallama Hauwa’u a client at PHC Fago***

*“As a result of the lessons I learned from the health providers, there is a friend of mine whom I counselled on attending antenatal care. She started coming and Alhamdulillah she has now given birth in this facility and I am happy”*

*“Patients asking for counselling have increased in number now compared to before this training. Before gaining this knowledge I would have to redirect a patient whenever they came to me with a question, but now I boldly attend to them and give them counselling on what is right and wrong.”*

***Yusuf Yahaya a health provider at CHC Funtua***

*“Alhamdulillah we have started seeing changes since this training was done. Clients are increasingly coming to the facility which was unlike before. We are very optimistic that this change is sustainable”*

more caring and receptive. Some of the clients stated how the counseling they accessed impacted on their lives or the lives of their loved ones



**Figure 5: Client Satisfaction Survey being conducted by interviewing clients/ Patients at Maternal and Child Health Clinic Shinkafi**

***Haram Saidu a client at MCHC Shinkafi***

*“Initially we did not want to come for antenatal care because we thought it was not beneficial, in fact my*

*first delivery was without antenatal care. But after I was enlightened by the health providers I have since then been attending. I later gave birth and frankly I can confidently say that I feel a difference in me. I feel much better and healthier after giving birth with antenatal care”*

**Umar Isa a client at CHC Funtua**

*“My wife came home and told me about what she had learned from the health facility regarding family planning and routine immunization. I was happy to hear about it we tried it. I’m glad to say it was the right decision because all our children are looking very strong and healthy now.”*

**Hadiza Umar a client at PHC Fago**

*“Family planning is okay so long as it is for the health of the mother and baby. Since we were young we knew about routine immunization but its family planning that was new to us. However, due to the counselling by the health providers I am now doing the family planning. We were also taught that if there are no females at a facility then it’s okay for a male to attend to us.”*



**Figure 6: Client Satisfaction Survey being conducted by interviewing clients/ Patients at Maternal and Child Health Clinic Shinkafi**

**Binta Shamsu a client at MCHC Shinkafi**

*“There was a time I gave birth at this facility and I wanted to start family planning. When I asked the health providers about it they said I should seek permission from my husband however, when I tried to he declined because he thought it halts child birth completely. We later came together to the health facility with him where he was counselled by a health provider on its permissibility in Islam as well as its health benefits. He agreed and we did it.”*