

COMPASS Update

Issue 8/September 2008

Regression, recession..and recovery

Local people model solutions to national problems

The standard of living in Nigeria is persistently very low. Despite its huge natural and human resources and oil wealth, the country is listed as one of the twenty poorest countries in the world. According to the World Bank, 70 percent of the population is classified as poor, with 35 percent living in absolute poverty. Poverty is especially severe in rural areas, where social services are limited or nonexistent. Rural infrastructure in Nigeria has long been neglected, with very minimal investments in health, education, and water supply. As a result, the rural population has extremely limited access to social services such as schools and health centers, and about half of the population lacks access to safe drinking water. Limited education opportunities and poor health perpetuate the poverty cycle.

But in some areas of the country, the trends are changing. Kurudu, a remote community near Abuja, recently found a solution to decades of regression and lack of basic social infrastructure and services through a self-help project. Through a Community Coalition, a volunteer-based structure established in the area by COMPASS to address local problems, the community solved the lack of potable water by repairing non-functional boreholes with funds solicited from community members. With the repairs, the Community Coalition appointed a task force to collect between N5N10 (about \$.03\$.07) from community members using the boreholes. With revenue from the project, the Coalition repaid the initial loan and has continued to

generate funds for regular maintenance of the pumps. Additionally, it has raised funds to implement other development projects ranging from laying the foundation of a community hall to repairing roads. Recently, the Coalition secured scholarships from local private schools for children in the community whose parents cannot afford education costs. The Coalition also revived a deserted and dilapidated bungalow into a functioning health facility that a Youth Corp member renovated recently.

According to Kurudu Coalition Treasurer Allayayi Kadayi, "We now keep a community account for all revenues and use the resources for developmental projects."

On a similar note, Bara community coalition in Bauchi State recently established a local community farm to generate funds to address critical, small-scale needs. Speaking on behalf of other colleagues in Bauchi State, Bara Community Coalition Chairman Mallam Haruna Katuka said, "COMPASS has changed us for our own

benefit." With the advocacy training they received from the Project, the community has been seeking improved services from the government. In a recent effort, the Bauchi State Ministry of Health yielded to the Coalition's request by providing equipment worth N13 million (nearly \$110,000) for its local health facility.

The initiatives in Kurudu and Bara are only two examples of how mobilizing, organizing, and guiding a community can make positive change possible. Through

programs implemented by COMPASS in the FCT and Kano, Lagos, Bauchi, and Nasarawa States, communities are increasingly accepting responsibility for improving their livelihoods by translating local skills and experiences into economic opportunities and stepping boards for improving both health and education services in their area. They are modeling a system that could be replicated to solve priority problems on a national scale.



Girl comes to the rescue

Thirteen-year-old Edith Egwu recently came to the rescue when a fellow pupil was injured in RCM School Kadarko in the Keana Local Government Area in Nasarawa State. Noticing the bleeding, Edith rushed to pick up the school's first aid kit from the head teacher's office and nursed the wound until a medical doctor and member of the COMPASS monitoring team arrived on the scene.



Photo: Blessing Anyuabaga

The COMPASS Team was conducting routine monitoring at the school when this incident was recorded. Edith was inaugurated as the school's health prefect following first aid training

for teachers and step-down training for pupils in 265 COMPASS-supported schools in Nasarawa State. According to COMPASS Child Survival State Program Manager Dr.

Blessing Anyuabaga, "It is interesting to witness the courage displayed by Edith and especially rewarding to see the transferred skills put into practice."

In addition to managing

the health clubs that were established in the schools, the health prefects are responsible for reporting injuries, taking care of sanitation, and monitoring contents of the first aid box to

ensure that they are promptly replaced by Parent-Teacher Associations. Despite initial hesitation about a pilot school health and nutrition program, it has successfully helped to promote personal hygiene among pupils and teachers.

The comprehensive intervention includes integrating health messages in interactive radio instruction broadcasts aired on local radio stations and promoting and providing functional toilets, wash hand basins, and a clean and reliable water supply in schools.

Increasing visibility for the common good

To sustain community-level initiatives focused on improving health care and education, COMPASS is exploring opportunities to increase the Community Coalitions' visibility by providing support for registration with the appropriate authorities. Additionally, the Project is linking the Community Coalitions to appropriate government agencies and nongovernmental organizations for increased impact.

In Lagos, Coalitions were linked with the Departments of Agriculture and Community Development

in their Development Council Areas. In Kano, thirty-nine community members from Gwarzo, Kobo, Bichi, Tsanyawa, and Dala received training from the Community Health Research Initiative, a local nongovernmental organization, while fourteen community members from the FCT participated in a training on running drug stores established in their community health facilities organized through a partnership between COMPASS and the DFID-funded PATHS project.

The Community Coalitions are being tapped as a

valuable resource by other projects to implement grassroots improvement programs. Recently, World Bank's Fadama Project built a market for the Kurudu community in Abuja and handed it over to the Community Coalition to manage. Members of the Coalition are now regarded as role models both within and outside their communities.

Exchange spurs increased action in communities

Eighty-four communities. The visits were reported by local Coalition members in newspapers and media houses, thereby ensuring that highlights reached a wider audience. As a result of the interactions, several participants pledged to increase their efforts toward greater accomplishments in their respective communities. Already, the Coalition from Shomolu is organizing a forum to present priority problems requiring policy action to the local government authorities. COMPASS used the platform to spur increased action among strong while empowering and motivating members of weaker Coalitions to become more active in resolving priority problems in their

COMPASS BRIEFS

Social Entrepreneur bags Political appointment

Tashan Babiyé Community Coalition Chairman Mallam Sulaiman Chindo recently received an appointment from the Bauchi State Governor as Chairman of the State's Wikki Football Club. The appointment was in recognition of Chindo's contribution to community development and improved health care in the Tashan Babiyé Comprehensive Health Center. The appointment joins several others from state and local authorities in Lagos, Kano, and Nasarawa States who are employing the services and experiences of volunteer members of COMPASS-formed Community Coalitions for greater scale development.

Immunization messages in adult Islamiyya classes

After attending a one-day orientation on "The Importance of Routine Immunization," twenty-one Islamiyya school teachers now are ready to incorporate messages on the importance of routine immunization into their lessons to mothers in Nasarawa State. To help educate their audience, participants also received various communication materials during the orientation, which was led by the Federation of Muslim Women's Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN), a COMPASS partner.

Nasarawa State set to sustain school health program

Nasarawa State's School Feeding Agency administered deworming drugs in 120 schools, benefiting more than 16,000 pupils. According to the Agency's Program Manager, Haruna Wakili, "the effort is part of initiatives to sustain gains of COMPASS in the State." In Kano State, 15,500 pupils in Gwarzo community received deworming drugs as a result of a resource leveraging effort by the local school's Parent-Teacher Association. The school deworming program is part of a comprehensive school health and nutrition initiative by COMPASS in Lagos, Kano, and Nasarawa States.

COMPASS receives merit award!

COMPASS recently received a merit award from the Nigerian Private Nurses and Midwives Association in recognition of "Outstanding Performance and Contributions toward Achieving Improved Health Care in Lagos State." The award was presented to COMPASS's Lagos State Team Leader Bisi Tugbobo during the Association's 2008 Annual Scientific meeting in August.

New Anti-Malaria Treatment Policy disseminated

In celebration of African Malaria Day, Nigeria's Anti-Malaria Treatment Policy was disseminated to 174 service providers and other health stakeholders in Lagos State during training on the current malaria management policy. The training was held in collaboration with the Lagos State Ministry of Health to create awareness on the existence of the policy and the role of various stakeholders in its implementation. In a related development, a COMPASS partner, the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN) disseminated the policy in three Local Government Areas in partnership with four Community Coalitions to commemorate Safe Motherhood Day.

Health facilities adopt business model

Health services is about to adopt a business model in Nasarawa State. During a two-day training, service providers from Doma and Keana Local Government Areas learned how to provide excellent customer service to their clients by displaying good interpersonal communication skills and ensuring that the right family planning commodities are available in the right quantities at all times. The training, a collaboration between COMPASS and the DELIVER Project, was intended to prevent stock-outs of contraceptives and improve client-provider relations.



ABOVE: Role play by participants at the International Youth Day Celebration organized in Nasarawa State
Photo: Kubra Ahmed

Chairman Idumayingbo CC, Deacon Ogunmiluyi presenting community concerns on health and education during LGA forum in Lagos Island
Photo: Efe Enakhena

Sensitization on Immunization by Gadara Maiwa community in Bauchi State
Photo: Rabi Ekele

COMPASS Cognizant Technical Officer Karla Fossand chatting with a Service Provider during a recent visit to Ikosi PHC in Kosofe Local Government Area, Lagos State
Photo: Efe Enakhena

Against the odds...

Despite momentary setback, Nigeria continues fight against the wild polio virus



Photo: Garry Prestus

The upsurge of the wild polio virus in Nigeria called international attention at the World Health Organization assembly held in May 2008 in Geneva, which urged Nigeria to take emergency measures to quickly stop further wild polio virus transmission. It was to this end that an expert review committee inaugurated by the Honorable Minister of Health met in July to review previous recommendations and the current epidemic.

The committee found that in Nigeria the polio virus strain that was the most predominant also happened to be the most dangerous and the risk of international spread was very high. The committee also noted that 50 percent of cases were in just two Nigerian states Kano and Zamfara. As a result, the committee called for enhanced political oversight, establishment of state-level emergency task forces, enhanced quality in implementation, more vigilant monitoring of National Immunization Days, and more focused social mobilization activities.

Already, the COMPASS Project has designated a general approach to blanket high-risk communities with information about polio, drawing on partner organizations such as FOMWAN. Through such collaborative efforts, the project conducts monthly house-to-house visits to

resolve non-compliant cases (children who have not received any or the necessary number of polio doses) and to persuade Imams to include immunization messages in their sermons.

Following the upsurge in polio cases, the project reinforced its social mobilization activities by piloting a ward-based monitoring strategy, which focused on two high-risk Local Government Areas, while continuing regular support in the other Local Government Areas in the eight northern project-supported states Bauchi, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara. The strategy resulted in identification of missed settlements, attention to non-compliance areas, and close monitoring of vaccination teams during the June 2008 round of immunization activities. The involvement of FOMWAN resulted in the resolution of 61 percent of non-compliant cases in the eight supported states. Overall, about 11 million children under five were vaccinated.

In the coming months, COMPASS will capitalize on the success of its community-based social mobilization strategy by continuing to work with FOMWAN and other partners to intensify mobilization activities targeting parents in high-risk communities to reach every child with a polio immunization.

COMPASS update is published quarterly by the Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector (COMPASS) to communicate the work of our Project.

COMPASS represents a partnership between the Government of Nigeria and the United States Agency for International Development. The Project engages local Nigerian communities in building high quality, integrated health and education responses to priority local problems.

COMPASS is implemented by nine partner organizations under the leadership of Pathfinder International:
Adolescent Health Information Project
Civil Society Action Coalition on Education For All
Creative Associates International, Inc
CONSTELLA Futures
Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Communication Programs
Management Sciences for Health
Nigerian Medical Association

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