

COMPASS Update

350 Student-Teachers Receive COMPASS-Funded Scholarships for Primary Education Studies



COMPASS Senior Education Advisor Semere Solomon presenting scholarship certificate to one of the beneficiaries
Photo: Ayobisi Osuntusa, COMPASS ACO

In Nasarawa State 350 student-teachers from Akwanga State College of Education smiled their thanks while receiving scholarship certificates guaranteeing fully sponsored education for the duration of their Primary Education Studies (PES).

In all, the COMPASS pre-service scholarship incentive program presents an opportunity for 600 student-teachers from three Colleges of Education in Kano, Lagos and Nasarawa States to fulfill their dream of teaching in Nigerian primary schools. The program is part of a COMPASS collaboration to improve the quality of teacher training in Nigeria. Candidates are selected through an intense screening process for a scholarship.

At a March 7th awards ceremony attended by State Commissioner of Education Alh. Usman D. Bagudu, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, and other stakeholders from the Nasarawa education sector, COMPASS State Team Leader Habila Alaku presented the school with a check for 4.2 million Naira to cover tuition fees for the 350 students.

PES GRADUATES TO GET PRIORITY

Recognizing the COMPASS initiative, the State Commissioner for Education instructed all education Secretaries to restrict recruitment henceforth to the well-qualified graduates of PES. "Graduates of PES are well-trained to handle courses at the primary school level and should be given priority for teaching positions in the state," he affirmed.



Acrobatics exhibition during the awards ceremony in Akwanga
Photo: Ayobisi Osuntusa, COMPASS ACO

Akwanga State College of Education Provost, Professor Musa Bawa, expressed his appreciation to COMPASS for promoting and supporting a higher standard of primary education in the state. He pledged that the PES school fees would be used to build a much-needed lecture hall to be named after the COMPASS Project.

According to Senior Education Advisor Semere Solomon, presenting student-teachers with this opportunity lifts the financial barrier to education and gives the students an incentive to learn more and go further. This contributes to more effective learning and ultimately to better educational achievement in primary schools.

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Perspectives

"I never knew the Public Health Center on Rest House Street could have the services now offered. They do delivery of babies, and the place is clean. We are already mobilizing our people to attend. I urge government and our people to support the efforts of the COMPASS Project."

Mr. B. Idowu, Market leader
Ojo Community
Lagos State



Cross-section of participants during proposal development workshop for Nigerian Partners and subgrantees in FCT
Photo: Ibidun Adeniyi, COMPASS ACO



R - L, Fatima Bunza, COMPASS FCT RH Coordinator; Susan Wright, USAID/Washington; Mrs. Inyang, Officer-in-Charge, and two nurses during Wright's recent visit to Karu Public Health Center in FCT
Photo: Dr. Garba Safiyanu, COMPASS FCT



FCT State Team Leader Dr. Leila Madueke; State Program Manager Dr. Garba Safiyanu; and LGA Field Officer Gombe Haruna during a community meeting in Anguwan Kaka in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC)
Photo: Usman Agono, COMPASS FCT



L - R, COMPASS Lagos RH Coordinator Mariam Jagun; State Program Manager Peju Adenusi; Hon. Afeex Ipesa-Balogun, Executive Chairman of Oshodi Isolo LGA; and State Finance/Admin Manager Julius Adetoro during the presentation of medical supplies by COMPASS to Oshodi-Isolo LGA in Lagos
Photo: Joseph Monehin, COMPASS Lagos

COMPASS Supports Antenatal Care Bill in Bauchi State

With the recent passage of a bill by the State House Assembly, one million women in Bauchi State will be entitled to receive free antenatal care.

According to COMPASS Policy Advisor Mohammed Bawa, getting the bill through the State House was the first step in a state-wide initiative to improve antenatal care. The next step is for Local Government Authorities (LGAs), who are responsible for implementing these services, to move swiftly to put a good system in place to offer services and ensure that people are aware of them.

During a recent advocacy visit to Tafawa Local Government Area, COMPASS State Team Leader Juliana Nathaniel appealed to LGAs who have not implemented the bill in their areas. She advised the Council on how implementation will help reduce infant and maternal death rates in the State.

Nathaniel also discussed how COMPASS can be of service in supporting the new bill. She promised that COMPASS-established and supported Community Coalitions will disseminate information about the new bill to both women and men and emphasized the advantages of antenatal services. COMPASS and the Ministry of Health will also continue to improve the quality of service delivery in the state by training service providers and stakeholders in modern techniques, including Integrated Supervision for Quality of Services (ISQS).

So far COMPASS has trained more than 250 service providers with a specific focus on antenatal care. The project also works



L - R, State Program Manager Mansa Musa Adamu; State Team Leader Juliana Nathaniel and Deputy Council Chairman Bitrus Goje during an advocacy meeting in Bauchi State
Photo: Rabi Ekele, COMPASS Bauchi

with community Quality Improvement Teams to renovate health facilities and supply equipment for antenatal care and delivery.

In response to Nathaniel's appeal for increased LGA support, the Council Chairman, represented by his deputy, Bitrus Goje, assured COMPASS that his Council will be committed to and engaged in providing quality health care to the people. He applauded the United States Government for funding the COMPASS Project.

New Facilities Increase School Attendance in Folu (Lagos)



New toilet facility in Folu Community Primary School compound
Photo: Morris Kamara, COMPASS Lagos

Attendance at Folu Primary School (Lagos State) has increased by 11% since construction of four outdoor toilet facilities under a COMPASS subgrant to the Folu Parent Teachers Association in September 2005.

In the community of Folu (Ibeju-Lekki LGA, population 2000), there is only one primary school. And although parents want their children to be educated, they still have reservations regarding the school's lack of many important resources a situation discouraging attendance and making class time less productive.

Thinking critically of the school environment, the parents and teachers of Folu recognized that one of the problems their children encountered at school was lack of toilet facilities. Pupils had no choice except to go into the bush, where encounters with snakes or even human aggressors could threaten their security. This, the Folu Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) decided, was a situation they could remedy in partnership with COMPASS.

Providing resources to the PTA in the form of a subgrant, COMPASS supported construction of four toilets for teachers and students. With a new perception of hygiene, privacy and safety for their children in the school environment, parents are now more comfortable sending their children for education. And the children themselves are more comfortable. Says the PTA Chairman: "We have witnessed the pleasant changes building these facilities has brought. Our children are more eager to go to school, and they don't have a reason not to stay in school."

Working to address similar concerns in other communities, COMPASS operates on the principle that sustainability is only possible through community involvement and ownership. In order to ensure community investment, the project is awarding a series of 530 subgrants in Lagos state over the life of the project and offering technical support to PTAs and other local organizations to improve the quality of education and health. So far, 113 subgrants have been awarded.

Kano and Nasarawa states are also benefitting from similar project-supported school improvements including provision of clean drinking water and classroom furniture and replacement of leaking roofs. COMPASS also supports the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) through bimonthly teacher training programs for 10,000 primary school teachers.

Nigeria Gets First Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) in Mother Tongue



Participants displaying certificates of achievement at the Interactive Radio Instruction Scriptwriting Workshop in Abuja
Photo: Ayobisi Osuntusa, COMPASS ACO

Until three weeks ago, Adeniran Makinde had never experienced the creative art of mother-tongue scripting for interactive radio programs. This is also true of the other 15 participants who “camped out” in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory from February 13 to March 4 learning to write Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) scripts.

Until recently, most primary school teachers used traditional methods of teaching in classrooms or used IRI in the English language. Now COMPASS has introduced the use of local languages in IRI, a method becoming increasingly popular in primary schools throughout the developing world. Enlivening the classroom with imaginative use of stories, songs, physical activities, and role plays, IRI lessons encourage and model interactive exchanges between teachers and pupils in their own “first language”. Monthly in-service workshops train teachers on how to make the most of IRI.

While continuing existing English language IRI programs in literacy and numeracy for grades 3 - 6, COMPASS is developing and scripting new programs for grades 1 and 2 in Hausa and Yoruba, including customized songs.

Last quarter, 51 professionals and members of the IRI team received on-the-

job training in developing the curriculum and scopes for IRI programs - the first time a local IRI team has handled IRI development and procedures from start to finish in Nigeria.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) has donated space for an IRI studio and scriptwriting area, which COMPASS has designed and equipped. In addition, state governments provide free radio time on local stations in Lagos, Kano and Nasarawa. This ensures that all teachers have the opportunity to utilize interactive teaching methods and testifies to the state governments' willingness to invest in the initiative.

Using active, participatory, and student-centered teaching methods, IRI leads to improved student learning and increased coverage, reaching more pupils compared with traditional methods of teaching. In addition, IRI has helped to overcome equity gaps between urban and rural children as well as between boys and girls. To date, 10,000 primary school teachers are using IRI to teach 497,987 pupils.

For public, primary, and Islamiyya schools across Lagos, Kano and Nasarawa States, learning time is IRI time. Now students are even humming local songs from the radio programs at home!

“As an artist who has had experience in writing, acting, directing and producing - I must say that IRI writing for me stands yet as the most challenging form of creative writing. This is largely due to the fact that the mother tongue language is being used as the stepping board.”



“First I see IRI as a re-orientation and reinforcement of teachers towards methodology. Another positive aspect of it is the student-centered teaching technique, which is unquantifiable and will surely get learners excited and enthusiastic about learning.”



“The IRI workshop has given me a new vista on creative writing. It's something different from the regular. And the fire to write a more creative audience-participatory radio script is burning in me. Miss this workshop, miss all!”



“I have learnt quite a lot about the various stages of packaging IRI. Specifically, I have learnt to put myself in the world of a 6 - 8 year old child. We are writing for their teachers and trying to find everyday things in their environment so that they can make the right connections and learn.”



Lagos State Takes Lead in Developing Advocacy Strategy



A cross-section of participants during the workshop in Lagos
Photo: Morris Kamara, COMPASS Lagos



COMPASS Senior Advisor for Public-Private Partnerships, Ben Aigbomian facilitating
Photo: Morris Kamara, COMPASS Lagos



Cross-section of participants during the workshop
Photo: Morris Kamara, COMPASS Lagos



COMPASS Senior Community Mobilization Advisor Ma-umba Mabiata facilitating
Photo: Morris Kamara, COMPASS Lagos

COMPASS Partners in Lagos State produced a draft advocacy strategy during a recent Advocacy Skills Building Workshop, where stakeholders had gathered to draw-up their policy agenda for 2006 in the 16 LGAs where COMPASS works and to program upcoming interventions.

Under the advocacy program, Policy Champions have been identified for special training in mentoring Community Coalitions to advocate for social change and in facilitating consultative meetings with State and LGA level stakeholders to discuss policy concerns. They will also identify and use data to determine advocacy agendas and to advocate for quality health and education programs at the state and LGA levels.

Last quarter, COMPASS summarized priority policies and developed policy briefs and fact sheets to raise popular awareness and inform policy decisions on health and education services in COMPASS-supported communities. Dissemination of, and awareness about, key Federal policies will also support advocacy activities at state and LGA levels to increase financial resources and expansion of services for reproductive health, child survival and basic education.

Benefitting from skills acquired by participants during the Advocacy Skills Building Workshops, advocacy groups will begin to use policy briefs and fact sheets for policy dialogue and campaigns to increase awareness and influence policy decisions.

Youth-Friendly Services Coming To States



Participants during warm-up exercise
Photo: Dr. Abubakar Izge, COMPASS ACO



Facilitators during one of the practical sessions
Photo: Dr. Abubakar Izge, COMPASS ACO



COMPASS Adolescent Health Advisor and two participants during role-play
Photo: Dr. Abubakar Izge, COMPASS ACO



COMPASS Chief of Party Carol Hart presenting certificate to a participant
Photo: Dr. Abubakar Izge, COMPASS ACO

Historically, reproductive health information and service facilities have not offered services that meet the specific needs of young people. Many youth in need of sexual and reproductive health care may either turn down or be denied access to health services for a variety of reasons:

- ~ Providers are often biased and do not feel comfortable serving youth who are sexually active
- ~ Youth do not feel comfortable accessing existing services because they are not "youth-friendly" and may not meet their needs
- ~ Community members do not feel that youth should have access to sexual and reproductive health services.

To address provider skills to deliver youth-friendly services, COMPASS and the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) are collaborating to equip trainers from Kano, Bauchi, Lagos, Nasarawa and the FCT with skills to train service providers at the LGA level in Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH).

The training plan was informed by a rapid assessment conducted by COMPASS last quarter, which revealed that

very few service providers have received formal training in provision of youth-friendly services. In order to increase access to services and information for youth, trainers have received first-hand coaching and can now provide step-down training to service providers in 15 pilot health facilities as a component of Integrated Reproductive Health Services in the public health system.

During step-down training, providers will be sensitized on the needs of adolescents and prepared to tailor RH services to youth.

The training, held February 13 - 25 in Nasarawa State, is a first step in the process of increasing access to Youth Friendly Services within the public health system. This would substantially increase the quality of care given to young people and scale up access to reproductive health services by adolescents.

Approximately 10% of the adolescents in four States and the FCT can anticipate Youth Friendly Services (YFS) at specified clinics in their Local Government Areas in the near future as a result of the current collaboration.

COMPASS BRIEFS

- Twenty nurse-midwives in Bauchi State are now able to recognize life-threatening complications of pregnancy and manage those complications and other emergencies during childbirth. This is as a result of a recent training in Life Saving Skills (LSS) supported by the COMPASS Project to reduce maternal mortality in the state. By increasing midwives' capacity to deliver high-quality services, COMPASS is arming them to reach out to rural villages, a key strategy for increasing access to healthcare in Nigeria.
- To help promote continuous quality improvement at all levels of clinical services, COMPASS recently trained 95 supervisors and service providers in 51 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Integrated Supervision for Quality of Services (ISQS). Participants gained skills in communication and decision-making to enable them to provide improved services at site level.
- Adolescents in the states of Kano, Bauchi, Lagos, and Nasarawa, as well as in FCT, can anticipate Youth Friendly Services (YFS) at specified clinics in their Local Government Areas in the near future. To improve the skills of service providers to deliver youth-friendly services, COMPASS is supporting the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) in an initiative designed to improve training of service providers at LGA level in Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH).
- More parents and teachers in COMPASS-supported states are responding to the needs of Nigeria's primary schools and pupils. COMPASS recently trained 1,988 Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) executives from 700 public and Islamiyya schools to address issues of quality in the primary education system in Lagos, Kano and Nasarawa States.
- To keep up with new developments and strategies in education, lecturers from Adeniran Ogunsanya, Akwanga and Kumbotso Colleges of Education are sourcing for information using the internet after training sessions organized by COMPASS.
- Though they have a strong desire to contribute to the development of the country, most non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have not been able to realize their potential due to lack of institutional capacity. In response, COMPASS is increasing the capacity of selected NGOs to diversify funding and better manage scarce resources. In a recent workshop organized by COMPASS, donor representatives from GHAIN, ENHANSE, Packard Foundation and the European Union provided NGOs with proposal application guidelines and pointers on how to write concise and compelling proposals.

COMPASS PARTNERSHIPS

- COMPASS and the Department of Community Development and Population Activities (DCDPA) explored avenues of increased collaboration during a meeting at the DCDPA Office in Abuja in mid-February. Issues discussed include support to the DCDPA, collaboration under the COMPASS Year 2 work plan, commodities security, the school health program, adolescent health and a new partnership for maternal and newborn health.
- In states where they work in common, GHAIN, ENHANSE and COMPASS are collaborating to strengthen linkages and create synergy between HIV and reproductive health services in the public sector. Creek Military Hospital and Ojo Naval Hospital have been selected as uniformed services health facilities in Lagos State for integrated reproductive health and HIV services funded under the USAID-sponsored Projects.
- COMPASS announced support for the reproductive health bill in a recent interview with the National Television Authority (NTA). In an interview with Kenny Young-Harry of Newsline, COMPASS staff Drs Habib Sadauki and Ben Aigbomian called on Nigerians to support the proposed bill on reproductive health (RH) and the establishment of a National Institute for RH.
- GHAIN and COMPASS last month began coordinating efforts on Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV/AIDs at Nuhu Bamali Hospital in Kano State, where the two organizations have renovated facilities to improve service delivery in reproductive health and child survival.
- The Kano State Government recently announced its intention to provide the Kano Polio Victims Trust Association (KPVTA) with land to build its headquarters and has designated Sufiyanu Ado, Financial Secretary of the Association, as Special Advisor to the Governor on Polio Eradication. These initiatives mark state recognition of KPVTA's role in organizing a landmark sensitization rally staged by KPVTA with COMPASS support in aid of National Immunization Days.

COMPASS Album



New Lagos SUBEB Chairperson, Chief (Mrs.) Olugbemiga, receiving wind-up radios provided under USAID funding for Interactive Radio Instruction programs in primary schools
Photo: COMPASS Lagos Staff



L - R, USAID SO 13 Team Leader Akua Kwateng-Addo; COMPASS FCT RH Coordinator Fatima Bunza; and Hope Sukin, Director of Health in the Africa Bureau of USAID, during handover ceremony of COMPASS-renovated Ushafa Health Facility in FCT
Photo: Dr. Garba Safiyanu, COMPASS FCT



Standing L - R, COMPASS ICB Specialist Ibidun Adeniyi; Chief of Party Carol Hart; Deputy Chief of Party Bola Kusemiju; PPP Advisor Ben Aigbomian; FOMWAN Vice Amirah Maryam Othman Idris; National Amirah Lateefah Durosimi; and Advocacy Advisor Diye Jibrin after a recent meeting on Institutional Capacity Building and information technology support for FOMWAN
Photo: Deji Adeyi, COMPASS ACO



Cross-section of COMPASS staff including Chief of Party Carol Hart; Deputy Chief of Party Bola Kusemiju; Polio Project Team Leader Garry Presthus and Snr. Education Advisor Semere Solomon during a meeting with Larry Lai, Vice President Division of Education, Mobilization and Communication, Creative Associates International, Inc., to introduce staff to Creative Associate's development activities with women and children and countries in transition
Photo: Kemi Ayanda, COMPASS ACO



Community members discussing ways to resolve health and education issues during a Community Coalition meeting in Kuje Area Council in FCT
Photo: Dr. Garba Safiyanu, COMPASS FCT

KPVTA Members Advocate for Polio Eradication!



Women at work using new sewing machines in KPVTA workshop in Kano state
Photo: Bala Manaseh, COMPASS ACO



Hope Sukin observing KPVTA welders using USAID-funded welding equipment
Photo: Bala Manaseh, COMPASS ACO



KPVTA assemblers at work on tricycle components
Photo: Bala Manaseh, COMPASS ACO

What started as a support group has turned into a revolution against polio and a platform for equipping polio victims to become financially independent.

Established in 1980, the Kano Polio Victims Trust Association (KPVTA) is a registered member of the Physically Handicapped Association of Nigeria (PHAN). KPVTA membership cuts across gender lines, with more women than men as registered members. The association provides vocational training for income generation and assists members to further their education.

Through a recent collaboration with COMPASS under funding from the Leahy War Victims Fund, KPVTA members have become dedicated advocates for polio eradication throughout Kano State. They led a landmark sensitization rally in November 2005, arriving at the gates of the Emir's Palace and at the Governor's compound to register their support for National Immunization Days. The Government's response was a promise of land on which to build permanent headquarters for

KPVTA and designation of one of the Association's members as Special Advisor on Polio to the Governor.

Hope Sukin, Director of Health in the USAID Africa Bureau, Washington, DC, recently visited KPVTA members engaged in cottage industries to support their families. Under Leahy funding, they had received three welding machines, 10 sewing machines, five knitting machines and two specialized embroidery machines to support income generating activities.

The new equipment will increase opportunities for a better livelihood for more than 75 women and men. It will also enable greater production of KPVTA products and thus an increase in proceeds used to subsidize tricycle transportation for members and provide books and other supplies for their children's education.

Subgrants Improve Quality of Educational Environment

More parents and community members are contributing to school maintenance and their children's success through COMPASS subgrants to Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in 37 LGAs, which are renovating schools to encourage girls' attendance.

Last quarter, 193 Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) addressed quality health issues (including water and sanitation) to improve the conditions of COMPASS-supported schools in Kano, Lagos and Nasarawa States. This quarter, 64 additional PTAs have been awarded subgrants for physical improvements in both public and Islamiyya primary schools.

COMPASS recently trained 1988 PTA Executives from 700 public and Islamiyya schools in Lagos, Kano, and Nasarawa States. Emphasis was placed on identification and prioritization of needs, planning, implementation and monitoring at community level. The Project will continue to support PTAs in identifying, and implementing quality education for their children through training and small subgrants.

The subgrants program supports schools to improve quality of learning through the procurement of instructional materials, rehabilitation of buildings, provision of classroom furniture and instructional materials, construction of toilets, and provision of clean water



Girls from an Islamiyya school in Kano singing welcome song
Photo: Alex Ukoko, COMPASS ACO



Public primary pupils in pupil-centered environment
Photo: Alex Ukoko, COMPASS ACO



PTA training in Lagos State
Photo: Alex Ukoko, COMPASS ACO



R - L, COMPASS Child Survival Program Manager, NID Central Facilitator and some members of a Sweep Group during March 2006 NIDs in Sakalawa Ward in Ajingi LGA in Kano State



COMPASS Senior Program Officer for Nutrition Dr. Wasiu Afolabi flanked by Vaccinators during March 2006 NIDs in Kano State
Photo: Dr. Mizan Siddiqi, COMPASS ACO



Vaccinators administering Vitamin A capsule to a child during March 2006 NIDs in Kano State
Photo: Dr. Mizan Siddiqi, COMPASS ACO

NUTRITION PARTNERS SUPPORT VITAMIN A COMPONENT OF NIDS

COMPASS collaborated with National Nutrition Partners and the National Program on Immunization (NPI) on Vitamin A supplementation to children 6-59 months of age during the March 11-14 round of National Immunization Days (NIDs).



HOW TO GIVE VITAMIN A CAPSULES TO CHILDREN (Instructions to Vaccinators)

- Step 1** Ask the age of the child. (Do not give to children below 6 months.)
- Step 2** Ask if the child has received a vitamin A capsule in the last one month. If the answer is "yes", do NOT administer vitamin A.
- Step 3** If the answer is "NO", ask the mother/caretaker to hold the child and make sure the child is calm.
- Step 4** Select the appropriate dose of vitamin A for the child:
- 100,000 IU to child 6-11 months (i.e., All the content of BLUE capsule or 4 drops from RED capsule),
 - 200,000 IU to child 12-59 months (i.e. all the content of RED capsule).
- Step 5** Cut open the narrow end of the capsule with scissors and squeeze the drops into the child's mouth.
- Step 6** Put all used capsules into a nylon bag and wipe hands to clean off oil.
- Step 7** Record the dose given to the child on the tally sheet.



Prior to the March round, nutrition partners met the NPI Interim Coordinator and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Edugie Abebe for increased collaboration to improve Vitamin A supplementation coverage through a coordinated effort between partners during NIDs. The initiative was led by Dr. Nike Adeyemi, Director, Department of Community Development and Population Activities (DCDPA), Federal Ministry of Health, and Dr. Davis Omotola, Secretary to the National Committee on Food and Nutrition.

Representing COMPASS, Dr. Mizan Siddiqi, Senior Child Survival and Immunization Advisor, and Dr. Wasiu Afolabi, Senior Program Officer for Nutrition, worked with other nutrition partners to develop a job aid for sweep team vaccinators on how to administer Vitamin A and a monitoring checklist for independent monitors for NIDs. COMPASS supported production of 50,000 copies of a job aid for distribution country wide by NPI.

In COMPASS states, COMPASS LGA Field Officers, Child Survival Program Managers, and State Team Leaders joined independent monitors to supervise and monitor Vitamin A supplementation in their respective LGAs.

Preliminary feedback indicates that the joint initiative of nutrition partners and NPI during the March round of NIDs contributed significantly to improved coverage of Vitamin A supplements to under-five children in Nigeria.

A meeting is planned to review implementation of the March round of Vitamin A supplementation by the nutrition partners in the last week of March.

Grassroots Effort Improves Healthcare in Ojo LGA (Lagos)



L - R, LGA Chairman Solomon Ajibola Akin-Aina, carrying a baby newly delivered at Ojo PHC; mother of baby; State Program Manager Peju Adenusi; and Head of Oto Awon Development Area of Ojo LGA, Cornelius Ojelabi
Photo: Morris Kamara, COMPASS Lagos

Members of Ojo community (Lagos) joined together December 29, 2005, to applaud the COMPASS Project for bringing quality healthcare to the grassroots level. Gathered in the newly-renovated Rest House Public Health Center (PHC) to celebrate and commission refurbishment of the facility, community members discussed the situation of healthcare prior to the recent COMPASS intervention.

For a long time, Ojo residents had received limited access to social sector services. A single public health center served a population of 1.2 million, and community members were dissatisfied with the quality of services and facilities available. The few who could afford private healthcare traveled to other Local Government Areas, but the majority were left with no choice other than self-medication with drugs from unreliable sources or completely foregoing treatment and medication.

However, following COMPASS-supported formation of a local Community Coalition (CC) in Ojo, members identified the main barriers to better health care, pinpointing poor quality of services and the run-down facilities at PHC. Supporting the CC's initiative, COMPASS assisted with renovations, provided delivery and antenatal care equipment, and trained service providers in communication skills and current service delivery trends. In addition, the CC established a drug revolving scheme to address the lack of essential drugs.

CC member and market leader Mr. B. Idowu appealed to community members to use the services now available at the

health center. "I never knew the PHC on Rest House Street could have the services now offered. They do delivery of babies, and the place is clean. We are already mobilizing our people to attend. I urge government and our people to support the efforts of the COMPASS Project".

Speaking of the significant increase in client flow, PHC Director Mrs. C.O. Olaniyan proudly noted that the facility now has equipment to measure its clients' blood pressure. "The PHC looks attractive and we feel happy in the environment," she continued. "We have running water in the rooms and toilets. Clients have enough space for waiting and the client load has increased."

For Mrs. Toyin Ojo, mother of three, whose latest delivery coincided with the commissioning ceremony, the day was also a celebration of life. "I came here because people say the clinic is good now. I had my first two children at private hospitals, but I was never taught how to take proper care of a newborn and I had problems. Now that I have delivered this baby in the PHC, I've been taught about proper breastfeeding and other infant welfare practices."

COMPASS Update

A newsletter published quarterly by the Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector Project (COMPASS) to communicate the impact of our interventions

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